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Mall returning to reduced hours

HOLYOKE – Effective Jan. 2, 2021, Holyoke Mall will operate under new hours of operation based on valued feedback and input received from both tenants and guests:

Monday – Saturday:
11 a.m. – 7 p.m., Sunday:
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Guests are reminded that restaurant, department store and entertainment venues may continue to

MALL, 7



Amy Brandt

HCC hires new dean for health sciences dept.

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is proud to welcome Amy Brandt as its new dean of Health Sciences and Culinary Arts.

Brandt, who currently resides in Greene, N.Y., most recently worked as the associate vice president and dean of Health Sciences at Broome Community College in Binghamton, N.Y., which is part of the State University of New York system.

DEAN, 8

Boys & Girls Club director to teach college course

HOLYOKE – Springfield Technical Community College this spring will offer a course that addresses a growing need: how to educate and care for children when school isn't happening.

Conor J. Bevan, the director of program development for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, will teach the new class, called Out of School Time.

TEACH, 8

Parade, road race CANCELLED

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – For the second consecutive year, the Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee has cancelled two annual events that are both huge cultural and economic boosting events for the city and the surrounding area.

Thanks to a continuing surge and the need for more time to administer the vaccine for COVID-19, the St. Patrick's Committee has voted to cancel both the Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race and the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The road race and parade were cancelled last year as the pandemic first started in March and much of the state had to be essentially locked down. The two events were cancelled as large scale events were no longer safe to have.

According to a press release from the committee, "since the cancellation of the 69th Annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade last March, Officers of the Committee have had numerous conversations with city health and public safety officials. All were hopeful that the COVID-19 health pandemic would have subsided, and it would be safe to gather in large numbers again. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Although some have been able to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine, it is not yet widely distributed enough. The health



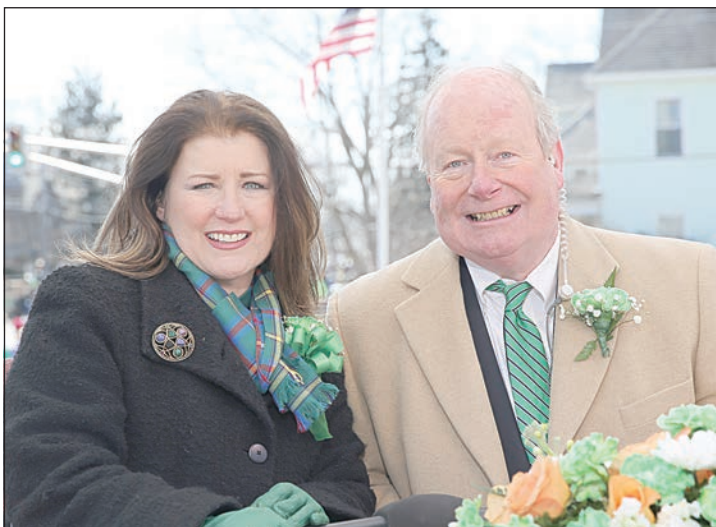
The Colleen float will not travel through the streets of Holyoke again this year. The Holyoke St. Patrick's Day parade was cancelled for 2021. Eileen Curran and Brian Corridan, the commentary team for the parade will once again sit out.

File photos

and safety of first responders, parade spectators and parade participants are our primary concern."

The committee then voted on Monday to suspend parade and race activities, thus cancelling the parade and race.

See PARADE, page 7



Marrero headed to G&E Commission

HOLYOKE – On Wednesday, Mayor Alex Morse submitted to the Holyoke City Council the appointment of city resident Marcos Marrero to be a Commissioner for the Holyoke Gas & Electric. HG&E



Marcos Marrero

is governed by a Board of Commissioners. The Commission is made up of three community members, appointed by the Mayor for a six-year term. Marrero will replace Commissioner Robert Griffin, whose term expired on June 30, 2020.

Marcos Marrero has served as the Director of the city's Office of Planning & Economic Development for

the past nine years and announced his departure from City Hall last month. In addition to his experience with the City, Marcos brings with him to the Commission a breadth of applicable experience and expertise, most

notably:

- At the Puerto Rico Governor's office, Marcos worked on energy policy for a jurisdiction that has a large, publicly-owned utility and suffers one of the highest energy costs in the US. This included energy incentive and grid interconnection policies, creating a "green loan" pro-

See MARRERO, page 11

Jourdain replaced on Board of Trustees

HOLYOKE – Gov. Charlie Baker has replaced former City Council President Kevin Jourdain with a new chair for the Holyoke Soldiers' Home Board of Trustees.



Kevin Jourdain

Jourdain was the chairman of the board during the past year when the home went through so much strife with nearly 80 deaths and dozens more sick leading to the ouster of Superintendent Bennett Walsh.

Baker replaced Jourdain with Major General Gary Keefe, believing Keefe would be in a better position to help gain federal funding for a new facility.

"His reason was he felt

Gary as head of the National Guard would have a better Washington presence to get us the federal money for the new home since he is down there all the time," Jourdain said.

Jourdain said Baker called him personally with the news and thanked him for his service as chair.

Keefe joined the Board of Trustees in November. He is the adjutant general for the Massachusetts National Guard.

It is not clear if Jourdain is remaining on the Board of Trustees as a regular member.

The state wants to build a \$300 million facility and will need federal funds to help with the construction.

Maestro agrees to settlement for false health service billing

BOSTON – In ongoing efforts to combat fraud in the home health industry, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today that her office reached a \$10 million settlement with a Lawrence-based home health care company and its owner to resolve allegations that they falsely billed the state's Medicaid Program (MassHealth) for unauthorized services. Since 2016, the AG's Office has returned more than \$40 million to the MassHealth program by going after fraud in the home health industry.

Pursuant to a settlement agreement with the AG's Office, Maestro-Connections Health Systems, LLC (Maestro) and CEO George Kiongera will pay \$10 million to resolve allegations that, from January 2014 through August 2019, they knowingly submitted false claims to MassHealth and MassHealth managed care entities for home health services that had not been appropriately authorized by a physician. Maestro has locations in Lawrence, Auburn, Athol, Framingham, Taunton, Holyoke, and Lynn.

“Companies like Maestro that defraud MassHealth take vital resources away from the program and the people who need them most,” said AG Healey. “Since 2016, my office has recovered \$40 million for MassHealth by combating fraud, waste, and abuse in the home health industry. Our work continues to ensure health care dollars are spent appropriately.”

“MassHealth identified allegations of fraudulent billing by Maestro and referred the company to the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Division,”

said Assistant Secretary and Medicaid Director Dan Tsai. “Today’s outcome demonstrates the ongoing work between MassHealth and the Medicaid Fraud Division and MassHealth’s program integrity efforts to prevent inappropriate payments.”

“The submission of false claims to the MassHealth program drains resources from legitimate patient care,” said Phillip M. Coyne, Special Agent in Charge, Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Boston Regional Office. “I appreciate the partnership with the Medicaid Fraud Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office in holding accountable those that seek to exploit this vital taxpayer-funded program.”

To bill MassHealth for home health services, a provider must ensure that the member's physician has reviewed and signed a plan of care certifying that home health services are medically necessary. Home health agencies are required to maintain these records for at least six years after the medical services are provided and claims have been presented for payment. The AG's Office alleges that Maestro billed for services for which it did not have valid, signed plans of care certifying that those services were medically necessary.

In addition to the financial payment, the settlement also includes a requirement that Maestro not resume providing services to MassHealth members until it has hired an independent compliance monitor to oversee a three-year compliance program. That program will include updated policies and procedures, new

training for staff, and yearly audits conducted by the monitor.

In a November 2017 settlement with the AG's Fair Labor Division, Maestro and Kiongera agreed to pay more than \$1 million in restitution and penalties after failing to pay overtime to more than 600 home health aides and failing to keep accurate payroll records.

Today's settlement is part of a larger effort by AG Healey and MassHealth to combat fraud in the home health industry. Since 2016, the AG's office has successfully prosecuted three home health agencies and their owners and settled civilly with eight home health agencies. In October 2020, Altranais Home Care of Lowell paid \$3.1 million to resolve allegations that it falsely billed MassHealth for unauthorized services. In April 2019, Avenue and Amigos Home Care paid a combined \$10 million to resolve allegations of similar false billing, and in August 2019, Guardian Healthcare paid \$1.95 million to resolve similar allegations. In May 2019 and August 2018, juries convicted owners of home health care agencies in connection with other schemes to defraud MassHealth. In December 2019, another home health agency, Petra Healthcare, LLC, and its co-owners, were indicted in connection with a scheme to exploit transient individuals in a housing-for-services kick-back scheme.

In addition to this significant civil and criminal enforcement work, AG Healey's Medicaid Fraud Division has worked with MassHealth to implement regulatory and policy changes aimed at detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse in home health services. In

February 2016, MassHealth imposed a moratorium on new home health providers and adopted regulations requiring providers to obtain “prior authorization” before seeking payment from MassHealth for certain home health services. MassHealth also created a specific medication management code and adopted reduced payment rates when caregivers visit multiple members at the same site and treat members for longer periods of time. AG Healey’s Medicaid Fraud Division has worked with MassHealth to educate stakeholders in the community to better identify and prevent common fraud schemes in this area. Since 2016, MassHealth spending on home health services has decreased by more than 50 percent, resulting in more than \$400 million in estimated savings to the Commonwealth.

AG Healey's Medicaid Fraud Division recovered more than \$45 million for MassHealth in federal fiscal year 2020.

This matter was handled by Managing Attorney Kevin Lownds and Senior Healthcare Fraud Investigator Shelby Stephens, both of the AG's Medicaid Fraud Division, with substantial assistance from MassHealth, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, the Massachusetts State Police assigned to the AG's Office, and the AG's Digital Evidence Lab. The Medicaid Fraud Division receives 75 percent of its funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under a grant award. The remaining 25 percent is funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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DOWNTOWN NORTHAMPTON

OneHolyoke receives COVID-19 community grant

HOLYOKE – OneHolyoke Community Development Corporation has received a Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grant to provide education to Holyoke residents in order to prevent and reduce the continuing spread and rise of COVID-19.

Communities of color in Massachusetts are among the hardest hit by COVID-19 in terms of infection, illness, and death. The goal of COVID-19 Community Grants is to reduce COVID-19 infections, morbidity, and mortality among Black, Latinx, and other people of color in the hardest-hit cities in the Commonwealth. The COVID-19 Community Grant has been awarded to OneHolyoke CDC to engage the Holyoke community by developing and delivering effective messages, and further support to the hard-hit community with education,

training, and outreach to effectively meet Holyoke’s specific needs.

The public information campaign will be concentrated on predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods to address the disproportionate spread of the virus among communities of color.

Educational topics will cover physical distancing, mask wearing, hygiene, and other harm-reduction behaviors and activities, and will be shared widely in both English and Spanish through OneHolyoke CDC’s social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Posts will also feature members of the Holyoke community.

The organization will also engage media to widely disseminate information, with information tables available at community outlets in the Latinx majority neighborhoods of Holyoke.

A designated web page on OneHolyoke CDC’s website, OneHolyoke.org, will be forthcoming that will provide a collection of resources, blogs, and videos for the community.

Juan Flores, a Latino Holyoke resident, will work exclusively on this project in coordinating social media and related placements and engagements to educate the community about COVID education and safety. Flores has recently earned an Associates Degree in Computer Support from Holyoke Community College.

Flores will be an asset in communicating important COVID-19 information to fellow Holyoke residents, as well as assisting in the creation and distribution of resources.

Holyoke is consistently listed as high-risk for COVID-19 according to the

State’s COVID-19 map, updated weekly. It has been recently reported that there are approximately 2,400 positive cases in the city of Holyoke, as of December 13, and the city’s 14-day test positivity rate is 7.34% (as of December 10).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Latinos are hospitalized from COVID-19 at four times the rate of white Americans.

OneHolyoke CDC is the only certified Community Development Corporation based in the City of Holyoke. Founded in 1971, OneHolyoke CDC has created over 160 new homes in the Flats, Churchill and South Holyoke neighborhoods, rehabilitated hundreds of apartments and provided thousands of home improvement grants to homeowners through the Neighborhood Improvement Program.

Hazen Paper makes splash with 2021 holographic calendar

HOLYOKE – Hazen Paper Company has pushed boundaries again with its 2021 limited-edition holographic calendar, demonstrating a variety of ground-breaking techniques developed within the Hazen holographic lab. Hazen Holography creates the illusion of motion and depth on this sparkling two-dimensional calendar by reflecting and refracting light at different angles. The calendar, dubbed “Moonlight Dive,” depicts a whale breaching the surface of a three-dimensional body of sloshing water, amid rising bubbles and schooling fish, against a dramatically lit sky and shimmering moon.

The calendar showcases Hazen-Lens, and utilizes a number of techniques, including random multi-angle holography for the school of fish, and two-channel lens and color motion to illuminate and animate the rising bubbles. The inset which reveals anchor

and compass alternately was created as a two-channel flip image. This oversized 18.5” x 26.5” calendar was created seamlessly thanks to Hazen’s Wide-format Tableau capability that permits production of materials up to 52” wide without recombine lines. The custom Hazen hologram was transfer-metalized onto a smooth, bright 12-point C2S (coated both sides) board, and printed by AM Lithography of Chicopee, MA via UV offset with customized opaque white designed to perfectly accent and reveal the holography. Manufactured with Hazen’s environmentally friendly Envirofoil process, it is made with renewable energy, less than 1% of the aluminum of traditional foil laminate and a recycled film carrier that is reused again and again. It is repulpable as paper after de-inking.

Hazen has produced holographic design and large format origination

since 2006, and is known for the holographic stadium edition NFL Super Bowl program and the holographic enshrinement yearbook for the Basketball Hall of Fame. Hazen Paper is the only vertically integrated producer of holographic paper and film in the United States, with a holographic lab and design studio on its Holyoke manufacturing campus. All holographic tooling, including recombination and electroforming is done here, for ultimate speed, quality and creative control.

Founded in 1925, Hazen Paper Company is an innovative paper converter specializing in holographic origination, film coating, foil and paper lamination, metallizing, gravure printing, specialty coating and rotary embossing to create specialty materials for worldwide use in retail display and POP, luxury, entertainment and media packaging, bookbinding, scratch-off lottery and other

security-related tickets, tags and cards, and fine art applications. Family owned, run by a multidisciplinary management team, Hazen is committed to sustainability, using hydropower produced by the Connecticut River, with certification to supply converted paper and paperboards that are FSC, SFI and PEFC certified.

Hazen received “Product of the Year” honors in 2018, 2019, and 2020 from AIMCAL, the Association of International Metallizers, Coaters and Laminators. Hazen has also been honored by the International Hologram Manufacturers Association, and recently received the “Next Century Award” from the Associated Industries of Massachusetts for unique contributions to the Massachusetts economy and the well-being of its residents.

To receive a calendar, please email customerservice@hazen.com or call 413-538-8040.

Wistariahurst to present virtual staged reading of ‘Failure is Impossible’

HOLYOKE – On Thursday, Jan. 14 at 6:30 p.m., Wistariahurst will present Failure is Impossible, a staged reading performed by Holyoke Community College Students. Registration for this live, virtual program is open to all. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

Written to celebrate the anniversary of the 19th amendment, Rosemary Knower’s Failure is Impossible dramatizes the debate for women suffrage by drawing on the Congressional Record, petitions to Congress, and other archival sources such as newspapers, personal letters, diaries, and memoirs. The cast of characters include Abigail Adams, Sarah Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Clara Barton, and Frederick Douglass among others.

The play Failure is Impossible was first performed on August 26, 1995, as part of commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the 19th amendment at the National Archives. To dramatize the debate for woman suffrage, playwright Rosemary Knower was commissioned to write this narrative script, drawing on the Congressional Record, petitions to Congress, personal letters within the

legislative records of the Government, and other archival sources such as newspaper editorials and articles, diaries and memoirs.

This program is open to all members of the public, but has been specially designed to address the needs of area seniors, many of whom continue to be socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is supported through a Community Development Block Grant - COVID-19 Grant to address, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is administered through the Holyoke Office of Community Development and has been planned in consultation with the Holyoke Council on Aging. Additional support has been provided through NEH CARES Act funding granted by Mass Humanities.

To register for Failure is Impossible or any future programs, please visit www.Wistariahurst.org or contact Eileen Maginnis at the Holyoke Council on Aging at maginnise@holyoke.org. If you have an idea for a topic you’d like to be considered for a future Wistariahurst session, please contact info@wistariahurst.org.

Online scholarship and fellowship information meetings announced

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund, now in its 121st year, has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools. Two online information meetings are scheduled for Monday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. for parents and students. To secure an invitation to attend, write info@HoraceSmithFund.org. Each session is about 40 minutes long and will include a question-and-answer period.

Scholarships awards of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$5,000 annually and renewable for two additional years. Students must maintain at least a B average in college.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including financial need, cumulative graduating GPA, extra-curricular activities, recommendations, and college entrance exam scores, if applicable. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Additionally, fellowship applicants must also submit their GRE or degree-specific test scores, if applicable. All recipients

must be full-time students and residents of Hampden County.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 18 graduating seniors from Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. Three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing graduate degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, located in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2021. Applications are available online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning the office at (413) 739-4222.

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COVID Q&A: Answers about new vaccine

SPRINGFIELD – Now there is really something to celebrate this holiday season when it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CDC - after the FDA's decision on Friday to grant emergency authorization for the coronavirus vaccine - has formally signed off on a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for Pfizer's vaccine to be used in people 16 and older. The CDC recommendation comes after the FDA's decision on Friday to grant emergency authorization for the vaccine.

However, most of the general public will have to wait until April to be vaccinated as healthcare workers and those at risk are to receive the shot first.

"The COVID-19 vaccines hopefully can bring some normalcy back to our daily lives in the later part of next year, depending on how many will get vaccinated. We expect that at least in the short term, people will still need to continue to wear masks and follow social distancing. While the vaccine is shown to be very effective in preventing symptomatic infection, it is not 100% and is still unclear how much it can prevent asymptomatic infection that allows disease transmission," said Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Health.

"With the current surge, the availability of vaccine will definitely help those vulnerable populations at risk of severe infection and death from COVID-19. There are still deaths occurring attributed to COVID-19 in Massachusetts, up to 60 in one day recently, although the cumulative deaths are not as high as during the first surge," he added.

Still public support is split on the vaccine: 60 percent of people said they were likely to get the shot, a recent Pew poll found, while more than 20 percent were strongly opposed.

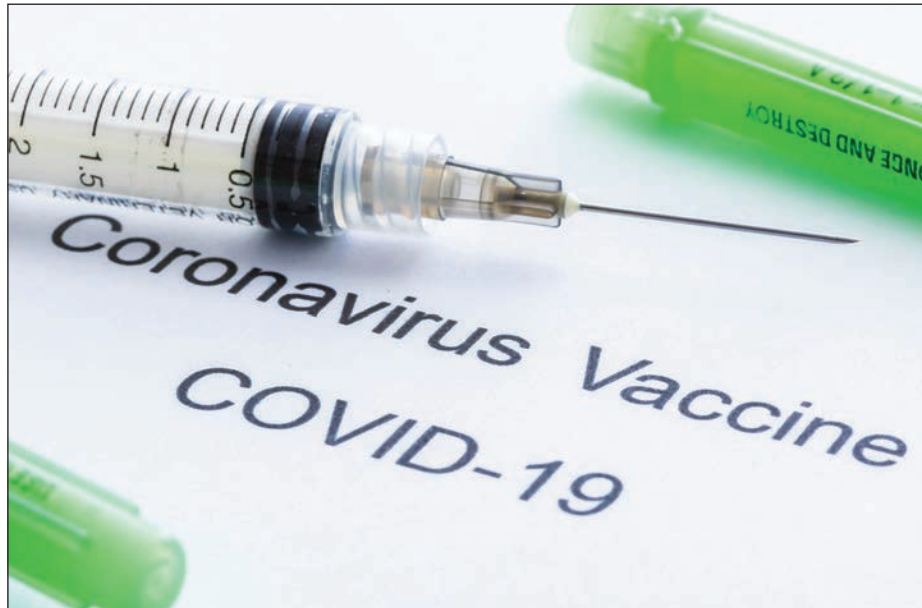
It is still unknown exactly how many people need to be vaccinated against or infected with COVID-19 to achieve "herd immunity," noted Dr. Paez.

"Experts estimate it will be in the range of 70-80%. We know that within 90 days following COVID-19 that reinfection is unlikely, however, reinfection has been reported after that. We do not know at this time for how long the vaccine will offer protection from COVID-19. Based on available data, the Pfizer vaccine is safe and very effective. Most side effects like injection site reaction, fatigue and headache resolve in 1-2 days. I believe one needs to look at the vaccine in the context of potential complications from COVID-19 illness compared to the side effects of the vaccine, then will realize how this vaccine can prevent serious illness for you and those around you," he said.

The following Q&A will answer many of the questions you may have about the vaccine:

Q: Who will be first to get the Pfizer vaccine in Massachusetts?

A: Among those who will receive the vaccine first as part of "Phase One" are front-line health care workers and long-term care staff and residents. They will be followed by police, firefighters, and emergency medical workers, home-based health workers, and other "non-COVID facing" health workers, according to the state's distribution plan. As for "Phase Two" priority groups, it will include residents with two or more chronic illnesses, essential workers such as teachers, transit employees and food, sanitation, public works, and public health workers, according to the state's priority list. After that will come adults who are 65 and over and individuals with one co-morbidity making them at higher risk for COVID-19. The vaccine will be available to the general public beginning in April as part of "Phase Three."



Q: Where can I get the vaccine?

A: While details are still being worked out, according to Massachusetts state officials, the vaccine will be administered to patients at hospitals, community health centers, and private medical offices. Pharmacies, including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, and OSCO, will also have access to the vaccine and will be able to vaccinate their customers. And, officials say the vaccine "will likely also be made available to local health departments for vaccinating their local residents at public clinics." Massachusetts residents can check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) interactive website, vaccinefinder.org, to see where a COVID-19 vaccine will be available at a public health clinic. For more information, you can also contact your primary health care provider, local pharmacy, or local health department to see if, and when, they will have the vaccine available.

Q: Do the COVID-19 vaccines have side effects?

A: As with any medicine or vaccine, there will likely be some side effects with COVID vaccines. Based on data reported for the initial trials of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in adults, there do not appear to be serious adverse events or safety issues related to these vaccines. Both Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines do seem to cause mild or moderate side effects for up to 50% of people within the first few hours and days of both the first and second doses of each. These side effects include fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and soreness and/or redness at the site of injection in the arm. The CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will be closely monitoring reports and the latest news can be found on their websites. The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are encouraging the public to report side effects through the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System.

Q: How effective is the vaccine?

A: So far, in trials that have involved tens of thousands of healthy adult volunteers, both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines show that they are 90-95% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection. It is still too early to know how long the effectiveness will last.

Q: Does the vaccine prevent transmission to others?

A: The vaccine will provide a 94 to 95% chance that you will not get COVID 19. However, it does not prevent transmission to others if you are already carrying the COVID-19 virus. You may be spreading the virus without knowing it if you do not have symptoms. Therefore, it will still be necessary to wear a mask and practice social distancing even after getting the vaccine.

Q: Can I get infected from the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: No, it is not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use RNA that encodes the spike protein of the virus – not the "live" virus itself to stimulate immunity. None of the COVID-19 vaccines can cause COVID-19.

Q: Do I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine every year like the flu vaccine?

A: It is not known yet how often a COVID-19 vaccine will have to be administered.

Q: Will the COVID-19 vaccine be free?

A: Currently, there is no cost to get the vaccine.

Q: How will the vaccine be given?

A: Currently the vaccine will be an injection, the same way flu shots are given. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require 2 injections. The Pfizer vaccine has been authorized for emergency use and this requires a second dose 21 days from the first dose. The Moderna vaccine, which is yet to be authorized by the FDA, will require a second dose 28 days after the first dose.

Q: If I had COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?

A: Research is still being conducted on how and if the vaccine should be given to those who have already had the virus. Based on available data, the vaccine does not harm those who had COVID-19 when given. We do know that you should continue following safety guidelines, including wearing a mask and social distancing. As reinfection is less likely to happen to those people within 90 days of COVID-19, the Pfizer vaccine may be given only after 90 days since the diagnosis.

Q: Do I get to choose which brand of vaccine I receive?

A: At this time, the Pfizer vaccine is the only choice until another vaccine has been approved for emergency use by the FDA. Eventually, when there are several different safe and effective vaccines available, there may be choices.

Q: Is there a minimum age to receive the vaccine?

A: Until recently, vaccine trials did not include children under the age of 16. Because of this, the Pfizer vaccine is only authorized for individuals 16 years and older. Pfizer has now included children 12 and older in current, ongoing trials. When the results for these trials become available in the future, there may be a change in vaccine recommendations.

Q: How long does it take for the vaccine to become effective?

A: It usually takes a few weeks after receiving the final course of a vaccine for

the body to mount an effective immune response.

Q: Will people still have to wear a mask and social distance after getting the vaccine?

A: Yes. The current safety precautions will still be important including wearing masks and social distancing. Here are some reasons why:

- As the vaccine rolls out, there will still be high levels of infection in our communities.

- You will most likely need two doses of the vaccine in order to be highly protected. Available data show that only 52% respond to 1 dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

- Even though you have been vaccinated, it is still not 100% effective, although close to it. It still unclear how much asymptomatic infection can be prevented by vaccination, and thus the ability to transmit the virus if you get infected.

Q: What was the process of developing the vaccine?

A: All vaccines go through a similar testing process. Once products are created in the laboratory and show evidence of safety and effectiveness in animal models, they may proceed through a progressively escalating series of human clinical trials in volunteers. Progress to each "phase" of trials depends on success in the previous one. Phase I studies are small scale human trials designed to assess safety and appropriate dosing. Phase II trials are larger human studies that assess safety in more depth and laboratory measure of effectiveness. Phase III trials are large clinical studies that seek to address safety and efficacy and are generally placebo-controlled studies, meaning that some volunteers get vaccine, and some get a non-vaccine injection.

Q: What were the length of trials? How long were people followed after the vaccination?

A: The length of phase III vaccine trials, which are the large-scale ones to determine safety and effectiveness, is based generally on reaching enough "endpoints" to show that the virus is safe and working. The main "endpoint" is the number of COVID infections that occur in each group – (vaccine and control) and how the vaccine can prevent infection.

Q: What are the outcomes of the clinical trials?

A: The Pfizer clinical trials showed that the vaccine is 95% effective in preventing infection. No serious adverse events were noted in these trials.

Q: What are the vaccines made of and how do they work?

A: None of the COVID-19 vaccines in development in the U.S. use the "live" virus that causes COVID-19. Both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines rely on a new technology called mRNA, the synthetic messenger RNA (mRNA). While mRNA technology is new, it has been studied for more than a decade and the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have been carefully tested for safety. Not all vaccines work the same way. Most commonly, vaccines are made from inactivated viruses or weakened live viruses. Vaccines use antigens (substances that prompt immune responses) to train the immune system to identify threats and produce antibodies. The COVID-19 vaccines being tested by Pfizer and Moderna use the mRNA that code proteins using the host cells' own protein-making process to make proteins, trigger an immune response, and build immunity to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystatehealth.org and follow us on our social media channels.

Doctors weigh in on what's good for you

SPRINGFIELD – Now that a stressful 2020 has come to an end, there are many ways to make 2021 healthy and safe for you and your family.

Doctors at Baystate Health suggest setting realistic goals and prioritizing what is most important to you, taking small steps, and remembering not to beat yourself up if you encounter a setback in your health goals for 2021.

Some healthy goals to consider as you continue on your journey to good health are:

Make A Plan for Good Overall Health

While weight loss, health screenings and stress reduction are among some of the best ways to achieve and maintain better health, creating a plan that is manageable is the key to success. Look at the new year as a time to set small, attainable goals that you can maintain throughout the year, that will also lead to long term success and better health.

Now is a great time to make an appointment for an annual exam and include your physician in your health goals for the year. For those who don't have a primary care provider, the best time to choose a doctor is before you need one. Over time, your health care needs may change or you may face a new health challenge. The relationship you have with your healthcare provider, who knows you and your medical history, can lead to a better overall outcome that will protect your health. Also, as the global telemedicine trend continues, especially with the advent of COVID-19, it provides a fast and convenient way for you to connect with your doctor for urgent needs such as fever, cough, and skin rash, as well as management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Whether you want to lose weight, quit smoking, or reduce stress, your healthcare provider can suggest additional resources such as support groups, reading material, or if appropriate, medications or aids that can help. Getting advice from your primary care provider and support from friends and family is a great way to keep your New Year's health resolutions going all year long.

— **Dr. Linda Schooner**,
Baystate Primary Care at
Baystate Wing Hospital

Don't Allow Sleep Problems To Affect Your Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to more sleep problems at a time when sleep is especially important for health and well-being. Good quality sleep is important for preventing infections and keeping your immune system working well. Studies have shown that sleep deprived people don't mount the same immune response after vaccinations as good sleepers, so it is important to make sure you get a good night's sleep prior to getting a flu or COVID vaccine. A recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine by Baystate Health's Dr. Eva Mok showed increased rates of flu in patients with untreated sleep apnea. So, getting good quality sleep is just as important as getting enough sleep. If you are having difficulty sleeping or signs of poor-quality sleep with loud snoring, difficulty staying asleep, urinating frequently at night or daytime sleepiness or tiredness, you may benefit from a sleep medicine evaluation.

— **Dr. Karin Johnson**,
medical director, Baystate Health
Regional Sleep Program and Baystate
Medical Center Sleep Laboratory

Get Vaccinated – With all the attention on with the COVID-19 vaccines, it is not too late to get your flu shot if you haven't received it yet. Flu vaccine was updated this year to match the anticipated circulating strains. If you belong to any of the groups prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, please get it. Both the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are important means in preventing serious respiratory infections. Beyond the flu and COVID vaccines, it is important to keep up to date on adult immunizations. The protection you have from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time requiring you to get booster shots.

— **Dr. Armando Paez**,
chief, Infectious Disease Division,
Baystate Health

Reducing Your Risks for Cancer

Reducing identified dietary and lifestyle risk factors can help prevent many diseases, including cancer. Don't use tobacco, avoid drinking too much alcohol, increase moderate aerobic exercise to at least 30 minutes daily most days of the week (moderately vigorous walking will do), and if overweight, shed some pounds.

— **Dr. Wilson Mertens**,
vice president and medical director, Cancer Service, chief, Division of Hematology Oncology,
Baystate Regional Cancer Program, Baystate Health

Keeping Kids Healthy

Until everyone gets their COVID-19 vaccines, parents need to model and help their children follow the basic COVID-19 safety guidelines of mask wearing, hand-washing, social distancing, and avoiding indoor gatherings with anyone who is not in your close family pod. Parents need to keep their children healthy by keeping up with their regular visits with their pediatricians to monitor their growth, development, general overall health, to give them any needed vaccines to prevent serious infections, and to keep up with medications for common conditions such as asthma.

During stressful times, parents need to be very aware of their children's mental health, checking in with older children on a daily basis about how they are doing, and watching for any signs of depression and anxiety related to the pandemic and social isolation. Also, during the pandemic there are 3 basic tasks for parents.

1. Tell your children that you love them and show them that love throughout the day in a multitude of ways.

2. Tell your children that you will do the best you can to keep them safe during the pandemic, and demonstrate that by modeling mask wearing, hand-washing, social distancing and avoiding indoor gatherings with people who are not in your close family.

3. Tell your children that whatever happens during the pandemic you will work together as a family to overcome

any difficulties. Modeling resiliency will teach your children the skills that they will need to overcome the difficult problems they may face as they grow older. Pediatricians are here to help patients and families through these difficult times, and parents can reach out to their pediatricians with any concerns about their children.

— **Dr. John O'Reilly**,
chief, General Pediatrics, Baystate
Children's Hospital

Reducing Your Risk for Diabetes

Over 34 million Americans have diabetes and 88 million American adults – approximately one in three – have prediabetes.

Prediabetes puts you at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and also increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. By modifying your risk factors and adopting a healthy lifestyle – from eating more nutritious foods and limiting your portions to exercising to maintain an appropriate weight – you can help delay or prevent some of the serious complications of diabetes such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney damage and limb amputations. Aside from reducing your risks for diabetes, if you want to maintain good health in 2021 and beyond, consider if you are overweight eating 20% less which can lead to slow sustained weight loss over time; fit in exercise, even 10 minutes at a time which can lead to significant physical and mental health benefits; addressing your mental health which can be the primary barrier to a healthier you.

Also, quit smoking, this is the best decision you can make for your health.

— **Dr. Chelsea Gordner**,
director, Baystate Inpatient
Diabetes Service, Departments of Adult
and Pediatric Diabetes at Baystate
Medical Center and Baystate Children's
Hospital

Good Mental Health

There are many ways to improve your mental health. Consider getting outdoors for walks in nature, ideally with others (socially distanced and masked). Find opportunities to be kind. Even though many of us are hurting in various ways nowadays, it's not unlikely that there are others who are hurting even more. It's important to remember that we all have things to give: attention, compassion, listening, forgiveness, it doesn't have to be material. Giving feels good year round, much better than receiving.

Also, be kind to yourself: treat your body well by eating healthy food and not overwhelming it with unhealthy substances such as too much alcohol, sugar, and more; don't be mean and punitive towards yourself, if you notice mistakes you've made or things you don't like about yourself—acknowledge them and make a commitment to change, make a plan to change, and get started.

— **Dr. Barry Sarvet**,
chair, Department of Psychiatry,
Baystate Health

Women's Health

Annual preventive exams are vital in detecting conditions like breast cancer or cervical dysplasia at an early, manageable, and treatable stage. The well-woman visit is a perfect time

to address bothersome symptoms, set health goals and learn updates on disease prevention. Checking in annually with an established provider supports a trusted relationship which facilitates seamless care if a medical problem arises.

— **Dr. Julie Thompson**,
FACOG, IFMCP, chief, Obstetrics,
Baystate Franklin Medical Center and
Pioneer Women's Health

When Emergencies Happen

My health tip for the new year is one that will come in handy for a lifetime. I often get the question: "When should I go to the Emergency Department compared to Urgent Care?"

It's not really a simple answer, but a good rule of thumb when any new, acute, severe, uncontrolled symptoms need to be addressed in the Emergency Department. For example, if you are having the worst headache of your life or experiencing any new acute severe shortness of breath, chest pain or abdominal pain, you should go to the Emergency Department. If you are having any bleeding from an injury that is not under control with simple first aid measures, that also belongs in the ED. If you are experiencing any new neurologic symptoms or new seizures/convulsions, that also needs to be attended to in the ED.

Anytime there is a loss of consciousness from any cause, that should also be evaluated in the ED. Urgent Care is an ideal locale for the care of minor injuries and ailments like coughs, colds, earaches, urinary tract infections, insect bites and stings. Urgent Care is also appropriate for acute flare-ups of chronic conditions such as migraine headaches, asthma, gout, and eczema.

Most urgent care centers have on-site x-rays and can take care of acute fractures and other minor traumas. It is also important to know during the current pandemic that you should not be afraid to go to the ED with any new acute severe symptoms as all hospitals have protocols in place to protect patients and their families from potential exposure to COVID-19. Trying to "tough it out at home" can be a fatal mistake if it's an acute heart attack or stroke.

— **Dr. Brian P. Sutton**,
FACEP, medical director, Baystate
Health Urgent Care

For more information on Baystate Health, visit Baystatehealth.org.

Flu vaccine deadline extended for students

HOLYOKE – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health had set the deadline of Dec. 31, 2020, for remote and in-person students to receive a flu vaccination unless they have obtained a medical or religious exemption. The deadline has been extended through Feb. 28, 2021. Learn more about the flu vaccine, view videos and resources.



Dr. Armando Paez



Dr. Linda Schooner



Dr. Wilson Mertens



Dr. John O'Reilly



Dr. Barry Sarvet



Dr. Julie Thompson

Poetry Corner

I'm Okay, Today —
Now Tomorrow

By Thomas J. Kennedy

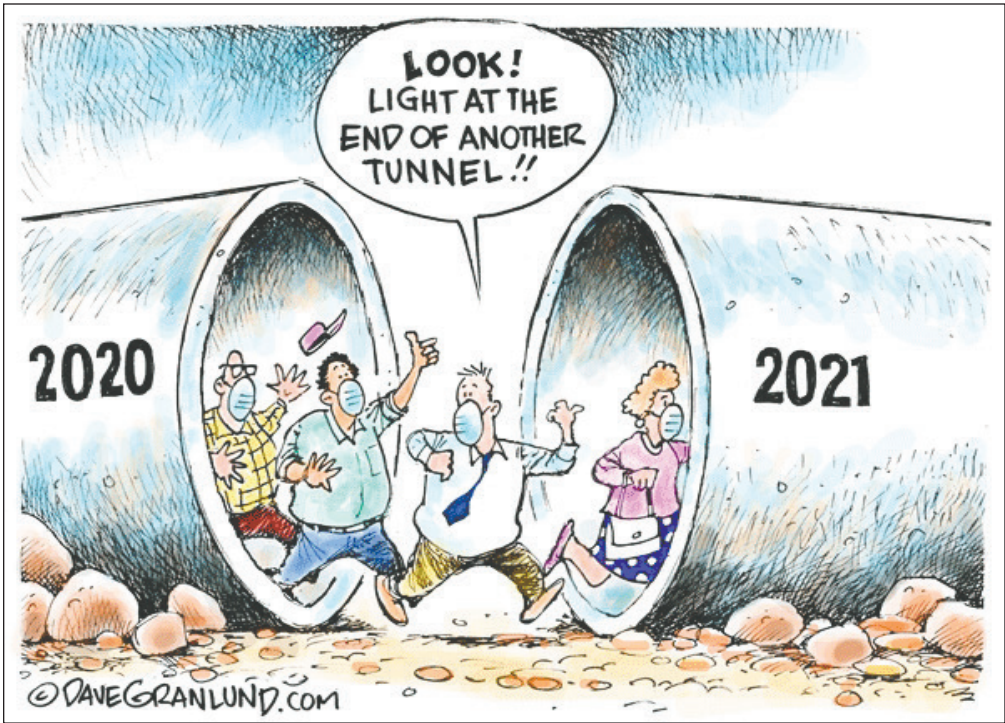
*I'm okay . . . You're okay
That's what matters today.
I'll capture the moments,
You capture the memories.
That's all I can say today.*

*Love everyone, Help every one
And never, never, never
Give up on anyone, including yourself.
God loves you and me . . . Here to Eternity.*

*He only wants you to be and do "your best,"
And He will take care of the rest.
Don't concentrate on strife
And say, "I'm only human – This is life."
Don't hurt anyone in body or mind
Pour out Faith and Love – Try to find.*

*Open your caring, others first then don't part
Pray and God will come into your heart.
Past Bad experience – Unfair
Right now break bad habits and if you fall
Pick yourself up – Try again to be on call.
God wants your friendship now
Later Eternity . . . Forever and Ever.*

*So you have a complaint –
Look across the street
He has no shoes
Now look on the other side
He has no feet
Now what are you complaining about
God! Peace, Love and Joy to you.*



Guest Column

January 1 to January 15

By John Grimaldi
and David Bruce Smith
Guest columnists

Whatever you call it: “Continental Colors,” “Congress Flag,” “Cambridge Flag,” or “Grand Union Flag,” it was the first national flag of the United States. According to historical lore, George Washington unveiled it Jan. 1, 1776, during the American Revolution, but the stars and stripes motif encompassed a replica of the British flag in the upper left-hand corner.

“It was sort of a compromise between the radicals who wanted to see a separate nation, and the people who were more conciliatory, and wanted to see some accommodation with the crown,” according to historian and flag expert David Martucci.

The History Channel noted in June of 1777 that “the Continental Congress adopted a resolution stating, ‘the flag of the United States be thirteen alternate stripes red and white’ and that ‘the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.’”

To learn more, the Grateful American

Book Prize recommends Kevin Keim’s and Peter Keim’s “A Grand Old Flag: A History of the United States Through its Flags.”

It is difficult for the iPhone generation to fathom the complexities of communication throughout history. For decades, telephones used hard-wired landlines to commence a call. And before that: the telegraph – an invention by Samuel Finley Breese Morse, who demonstrated its “efficiency” via an electrical impulse on January 6, 1838. It came with a code that Morse created using dots and dashes--instead of the alphabet--to move a message from point A to point B.

He formulated the idea in 1832; by 1838, with the assistance of his two partners, Leonard Gale and Alfred Vail, he had a working model. Morse requested funding from Congress to make the prototype. It included construction of overhead wires between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland, but the legislators demurred.

Five years later, he garnered the approval, and the money, to proceed; on May 24, 1844 Morse sent his first telegraphic message: “What hath God wrought.”

See HISTORY, page 7

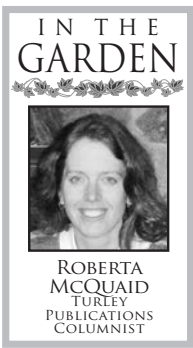
Guest Column

All-America Selections for 2021 named

With the holidays behind us it’s time for a pick-me-up. Nothing cheers me more than dreaming about my next garden. I love the early planning stage most of all and it starts about this time each year. Seed catalogs begin to arrive in the mail and the glossy photos and “flowery” dialogue lure me to open the pages and curl up with a notebook and a warm cup of tea. I began this yearly ritual over three decades ago and it never grows old. Perhaps you are a like-minded soul who also thinks this is a good way to pass a cold winter evening.

When perusing the catalog, no doubt you will come across the All-America Selections badge of honor next to certain flower, herb, perennial or vegetable varieties. What exactly does it mean to be an AAS winner? You’ll be glad to learn more about this trusted organization and what receiving its award means for your garden.

For the last 88 years, the distinction of All-America Selection has been bestowed on new, worthy cultivars of our favorite plants. They are awarded this honor after thorough testing at independent trial grounds throughout North America, with the nonprofit organization’s motto being “tested nationally and proven locally.” AAS judges compare new flower introductions to those that are already



on the market, searching for such desirable characteristics as novel flower color and form, fragrance, length of flowering and disease or pest tolerances or resistance. Vegetables are evaluated similarly, with judges contrasting uniformity, ease of growth, harvest-time and disease tolerance and more with already established varieties. After assessing the plants throughout the growing season scores are tabulated and those

with the highest average are considered to be worthy of an AAS award. Let’s learn more about two of this year’s winners.

Celosia Kelos Candela Pink is a 2021 AAS flower winner. For those of you who know and love plumed celosia, this is your pick. Judges touted this plant as an “Energizer Bunny” bloom-wise. Foot tall bright deep pink flower spikes rise above foliage that tops off just under two and a half feet tall. Flowers are long-lasting and unlike some celosia, keep their color throughout the season. Judges agree that Kelos Candela Pink is great filler for mixed containers, adding height and textural interest but it also succeeds as a landscape plant either in mass plantings or borders. Reportedly it also dries well too, although I will believe it when I try it for myself since most celosia are prone to shattering. This AAS winner is available in plant form only.

Another winner that I am very excited about is Zinnia Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor. This new addition to the ever-popular floriferous and disease resistant ‘Profusion’ series starts out with a vibrant red center surrounded by golden yellow petals only to transform into shades of pink, apricot and salmon as it ages. Perhaps the next best attribute of this winner after its alter color ego is that it maintains a compact size of about a foot tall. This winner is versatile, too, succeeding in containers, hanging baskets, mixed plantings and en masse. Another bonus: pollinators love it! Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor is also the recipient of the Fleuroselect Gold Medal award for performance in European trials.

Because testing is local, I feel confident when I purchase plants or seeds of past or present AAS winners and with proper care they should live up to their description in my own garden. For more information and a full list of winners past and present, log on to www.all-americaselections.org. Here you will find many steady Eddies of the garden world.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

the **Sun**
HOLYOKE

The Sun is published every Friday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.

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A Quote

OF NOTE

“Non-violence means avoiding not only external physical violence, but also internal violence of spirit.

You not only refuse to hurt a man, but you refuse to hate him.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Guest Column

In My Backyard

By Ellenor Downer

Last week I received calls from two different residents in Belchertown. One had four bluebirds and the other had three female pine grosbeaks at their feeding tray for the first time ever.

Pine grosbeaks are an irruptive species. Bird watchers are seeing many irruptive species evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, red-breasted nuthatches and pine grosbeaks.

Pine grosbeaks are nine inches long. The male has a rose-red head, chest and back. The wings are black with two white wing bars and a stubby black bill. The female is similar to the male, but she has olive-yellow on the head and rump.

Immature male pine grosbeaks are like

the adult female, but they have an orangish head and rump. The immature female is similar to the adult female. Immatures keep this plumage for one year. Pine grosbeaks forage on the ground and in foliage for seeds, nuts, buds and fruits. They also eat insects. At feeders, they prefer sunflower seeds.

The female lays two to six blue green eggs with dark marks in a nest of mosses, twigs, roots, lichens and grasses. These grosbeaks summer in coniferous woods, high montane forests and winter near fruit and seed trees. They may associate with Bohemian waxwing flocks.

The pine grosbeak song is a musical warble. Its call is a three note whistle with the middle note highest like “teewetee.”

Northern harrier

A Hubbardston couple feed the birds under a crab apple tree on the front yard. Sunday the husband looked to see what birds were feeding. The wife said, “He looked further out and saw a hawk feeding on something on the ground. He called me and we thought the hawk had gotten a bird. He took his binoculars out and he could see that the hawk was a Northern Harrier so he put his outside clothes on and went to investigate further as the hawk kept eating until he got to about four feet from him. It was not a bird, but a red squirrel he was eating.” The harrier flew away and the couple were glad it was not a bird.

Birds at my feeders

Dec. 18, I counted seven blue jays at my feeder, all at once. I also had a red-bellied woodpecker ad a downy woodpecker eating seeds off the ground. A Carolina wren came to the tray feeder. American goldfinch, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice and juncos love the Niger or thistle seeds I put out. I put the Niger feeder up in hopes of attracting pine siskins, so far no luck

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100 or emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com.



The bagpiping will not be heard in 2021. Officials are hopeful for a parade in 2022.

PARADE, from page 1

“In observance of the public health circumstances, the Parade Committee voted at its Jan. 3 virtual meeting to ‘suspend all in-person Parade activities through the end of March 2021.’ As a result of this vote, the 2020-2021 Parade will be postponed until 2022.”

Parade President Marc Joyce said the decision was very difficult, and parade organizers waited as long as possible before making the tough decision to cancel the parade.

“This was not an easy decision to make”, said Marc Joyce, 2020-2021 Parade President. “We understand that many will be saddened, but we need to do what is best for our community. We will march again, and we will have much to celebrate over homecoming weekend in 2022.

“I would like to sincerely thank the many people who have contacted us over the past year. The Committee is com-

prised of 200+ members who work all year-long to put on, what we believe, is the best St. Patrick’s Parade in the country. I would like to thank all of them for their efforts in helping to carry-out this celebrated tradition. The Committee would also like to acknowledge the City of Holyoke and our many sponsors, without whose assistance and cooperation the Parade would not be possible year-after-year.”

The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke will “hold-over” the 2020 Award Recipients and Colleens in order to celebrate them on March 20, 2022 at the 69th Annual Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade. Current Parade Committee Officers and members of the Board of Directors, as presently constituted, will continue in the same capacities through the 2021-2022 Parade Season.

The Hartford St. Patrick’s Parade was cancelled a couple of months ago, but Holyoke officials balked at following suit, hoping a parade was still feasible.

MALL, from page 1

offer extended hours into the evening and are encouraged to call ahead to confirm a specific venue’s hours of operation or visit the center’s online directory here.

HISTORY, from page 6

For more information, the Grateful American Book Prize recommends Lewis Coe’s “The Telegraph: A History of Morse’s Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States.”

The U.S. Constitution was signed into law by the delegates of the Constitutional Convention in September of 1787. It structured the federal government, explained the essential laws of the country and guaranteed basic rights for every citizen.

But it was not the first American Constitution. That inaugural document was written and adopted on Jan. 14, 1639, by the settlers from the original Massachusetts Bay Colony, who had migrated to the Connecticut River Valley. It was known as the Fundamental Orders.

According to History.com, “Roger

Guests are also reminded to wear a mask while inside or outside on Holyoke Mall property. For more information about Holyoke Mall/Pyramid Management Group safe shopping protocols, visit our Healthy Shopper Guidelines.

Ludlow, a lawyer, wrote much of the Fundamental Orders, and presented a binding and compact frame of government that put the welfare of the community above that of individuals. It was also the first written constitution in the world to declare the modern idea that ‘the foundation of authority is in the free consent of the people.’ In 1662, the Charter of Connecticut superseded the Fundamental Orders, though the majority of the original document’s laws and statutes remained in force until 1818.”

For more information, the Grateful American Book Prize recommends A. Chamberlain’s “The First Constitution Of Connecticut: The Fundamental Orders.”

History Matters A biweekly column courtesy of The Grateful American Book Prize, which show’s the nation’s children that their past is prelude to their future.



The Annual St. Patrick’s Road Race has been cancelled. It is also the second straight year the event will not happen.

File photos

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- CLUES ACROSS**

 - 1. Partner to “oohed”
 - 6. Relaxing places
 - 10. Humorous monologue
 - 14. Simple elegance
 - 15. Bearable
 - 17. Disobedience
 - 19. Express delight
 - 20. Gov’t attorneys
 - 21. Wake up
 - 22. A type of band
 - 23. Remain as is
 - 24. Turfs
 - 26. Battle-ax
 - 29. Volcanic crater
 - 31. The mother of Jesus
 - 32. One’s life history
 - 34. “Rule, Britannia” composer
 - 35. Doubles
 - 37. Jacob __, American journalist
 - 38. House pet
 - 39. S. African river
 - 40. Broad sashes
- 41. Establish as a foundation
 - 43. KGB double agent Aldrich __
 - 45. Part of a book
 - 46. Taxi
 - 47. Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
 - 49. Train group (abbr.)
 - 50. Frames per second
 - 53. Have surgery
 - 57. Formal withdrawal from a federation
 - 58. Guitarist sounds
 - 59. Greek war god
 - 60. 2,000 lbs.
 - 61. Helps escape
- CLUES DOWN**

 - 1. Currency exchange charge
 - 2. River in Tuscany
 - 3. Breakfast dish
 - 4. Defunct European currency
- 5. Upper class young woman
 - 6. Part of a purse
 - 7. Self-contained units
 - 8. Boxing’s GOAT
 - 9. Legislators
 - 10. Flightless birds
 - 11. U. of Miami’s mascot is one
 - 12. Floating ice
 - 13. Low, marshy land
 - 16. Seldom
 - 18. Lyric poems
 - 22. Law enforcement agency (abbr.)
 - 23. Full extent of something
 - 24. __ Claus
 - 25. Naturally occurring solid material
 - 27. Acquired brain injury behavior science (abbr.)
 - 28. Thirteen
 - 29. Partner to cheese
- 30. Member of a Semitic people
 - 31. One thousandth of an inch
 - 33. Former CIA
 - 35. Most lemony
 - 36. Engage in
 - 37. Small Eurasian deer
 - 39. Provisions
 - 42. All humans have them
 - 43. Swiss river
 - 44. Storage term (abbr.)
 - 46. Famed Broadway lyricist Sammy
 - 47. Dutch colonist
 - 48. Full-grown pike fish
 - 49. Egyptian sun god
 - 50. Flute
 - 51. Flew off!
 - 52. Scottish tax
 - 53. Young women’s association
 - 54. Populous Brazilian city
 - 55. Malaysian lsthmus
 - 56. Pointed end of a pen

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 11

Is it safe for pregnant women to get the coronavirus vaccine?

SPRINGFIELD – Is it safe for pregnant women to get the coronavirus vaccine?

That’s a question that two Baystate Medical Center doctors contemplated together recently - one a primary care physician at Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center, who is also board certified in infectious diseases, and the other an OB/GYN.

Dr. Amanda Westlake learned in September that she was expecting her third child. As an infectious disease specialist, when she visited with her OB/GYN, Dr. Katie Barker of Baystate Wesson Women’s Group, she was already familiar with much of the emerging literature on pregnancy and COVID-19. It is concisely stated on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website that: “Based on what we know at this time, pregnant people are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people. Additionally, pregnant people with COVID-19 might be at increased risk for other adverse outcomes, such as preterm birth.”

But when the two doctors came together to discuss whether Dr. Westlake should get the coronavirus vaccine, the answer wasn’t that simple – there is no scientific study on whether or not the vaccine is safe for pregnant women.

“Pfizer did not include pregnant women in its clinical trials to establish the safety and efficacy of their vaccine (it is common in clinical trials to exclude

pregnant women). That was unfortunate because our professional organization, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has long advocated for women to be involved in vaccine trials,” said Dr. Barker.

“As a result, we do not have specific data on which to make a decision about pregnant women receiving the vaccine. However, we have no reason now to suspect that it would work differently or be harmful to pregnant women, which is something I tell my patients every day,” she added.

And, when studies are completed on the vaccine’s effects on pregnant women now being inoculated against the virus, Dr. Barker said she would be surprised if they discover anything unexpected. Recognizing that pregnant women everywhere would need guidance, the Shared Decision-Making: COVID Vaccination in Pregnancy working group at the University of Massachusetts Medical School – Baystate was created under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Schoenfeld, an Emergency Medicine physician at Baystate. Dr. Schoenfeld, a shared decision-making researcher in the hospital’s Institute for Healthcare Delivery and Population Science, has experience making decision aids to help patients make decisions together with their doctors. Because of the lack of evidence to guide recommendations for pregnant women, a shared decision aid was needed to help women understand the risks and benefits and the unknowns.

“Shared decision making helps patients understand their choices and come to an informed decision with their doctors about their care. Dr. Schoenfeld noted that “in general the vaccine is highly recommended and safe” and although there was no hard data available on pregnancy and the vaccine, it wasn’t as if “there was no evidence at all about the vaccine to share in an aid.”

“Certainly, for many pregnant women the pros outweigh the cons,” said Dr. Schoenfeld, who noted that when putting together the decision aid it was important to involve multiple stakeholders, such as maternal-fetal medicine experts, COVID experts and pregnant healthcare workers.

The result is a 6-page decision aid on the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines that starts with the basics: “I’m pregnant. Should I get a COVID vaccine?” It discusses a woman’s options, the benefits and risks of getting an mRNA COVID vaccine, and other information to help pregnant women make an informed decision. There are also additional details about breastfeeding, noting the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) report that there is no reason to believe that the vaccine affects the safety of breastmilk. Since completing the aid, it has been shared via Twitter and with various national professional networks such as maternal fetal medicine doctors, obstetricians, emergency medicine doctors, and medical infor-



matics leaders. Based on feedback from those who have received the aid, it is being used at Boston Medical Center, Kaiser Southern California, Mass General Hospital, and in multiple other practices including Texas, and all around the country.

“We have received so much positive feedback. We were able to quickly create Spanish and Russian versions and have made them available as well,” said Dr. Schoenfeld.

To view the latest version of the decision guide, visit: <https://www.baystatehealth.org/covid19/vaccine/pregnancy> For more information about Baystate Health, people may visit baystatehealth.org.

Better Business Bureau warns of COVID-19 vaccine scams

REGION – With United States and Canada approving a COVID-19 vaccine, government officials expect scams to emerge as distribution begins. Watch out for everything from phony treatments to phishing messages.

Government officials have already been cracking down on phony COVID testing kits and treatments. Now, they are ramping up efforts to prevent the sale of fake vaccines.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is working with the drug companies developing the vaccines to stop the sale and distribution of phony versions. Also, the Federal Trade Commission issued warning letters to several companies claiming they had a product to cure or pre-

vent the virus.

Selling fake vaccines and other treatments is likely only one of many ways scammers will try to cash in on the vaccine release. Watch out for phishing messages attempting to trick you into sharing your passwords and personal information. Con artists have already impersonated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in phishing emails that claim to have news about the disease. BBB has also seen an increase in scams using robocalls to impersonate government officials.

Research carefully: Scammers are very creative, so be skeptical of anything that seems too good or crazy to be true. Double check any information about the

vaccine with official news sources. And be aware that none of the vaccines can be currently purchased online or in stores.

Check with your doctor: If you want a vaccine early, reach out to your healthcare provider about your options. If you don’t have a primary care physician, check out the official website of your local health department for more information

Ignore calls for immediate action. While you may want to be first in line for the vaccine, don’t let that sense of urgency cloud your judgment. Scammers try to get you to act before you think. Don’t fall for it.

Think the link may be real? Double check the URL. Scammers often buy official-looking URLs to use in their cons. Be

careful that the link is really what it pretends to be. If the message alleges to come from the local government, make sure the URL ends in .gov (for the United States) or .ca (for Canada). When in doubt, perform a separate Internet search for the website.

Read more about coronavirus scams on the Federal Trade Commission’s website. Learn more about the disease at the CDC’s FAQ page. Also, the FDA is updating this page about its progress in developing a treatment for coronavirus.

BBB has identified many ways in which scammers are cashing in the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more about clinical trial scams, contract tracing cons, counterfeit face masks and government agency imposters.

DEAN, from page 1

At SUNY Broome, she focused on developing partnerships with local area hospitals to address healthcare worker shortages and advocated for enhanced use of simulation to improve clinical education and position programs to remain current with emerging national trends in healthcare education.

At HCC, she will oversee seven academic programs: Foundations of Health; Medical Assisting; Medical Billing and

Coding; Nursing (associate of science and practical); Radiologic Technology; Veterinary and Animal Science; and Culinary Arts.

She started her new job at HCC on Monday, Jan. 4, 2021.

Brandt holds a master’s degree in social work from California State University, Sacramento, and a PhD in social work from the University of California Los Angeles

After earning her PhD, she began working in education, initially at University of California Berkeley in the

School of Social Welfare, where she focused on program administration and teaching introductory social work courses.

In 2007, she transitioned to the community college setting in California, focusing on allied health education and has worked on allied health program development in California, Florida, Texas, and New York.

Brandt has extensive experience working with state regulatory agencies, as well as with developing self-studies for programmatic accreditation. She has

served as a site visitor for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), reviewing institutions for compliance with general education and educational effectiveness standards.

She has collaborated with multiple programs on developing assessment plans to assess educational quality and delivery and has co-led a variety of different campus committees related to program review, general education, professional development, COVID-19 re-opening, and student retention and equity initiatives.

TEACH, from page 1

While the need to enrich and provide care for children when they’re not in school has been growing over the past several years, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace and demand for educators, Bevan said.

“What we’re seeing now in our field is really fascinating,” Bevan said. “You have virtual or remote public school education. You have a growing need for childcare, and you have the vast majority of parents unable to stay at home with their child. It creates a tremendous burden on them.”

Often, parents face the difficult choice of working or staying at home to support their child. In many cases, it’s an “impossible choice” because parents cannot afford not to work, Bevan said.

Bevan said organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club offer “out of school time” childcare services and programs and face a growing demand for trained educators. The STCC course, which is designed to help meet the demand, is an elective that is part of the Early Childhood Education Transfer degree program, but is open to anyone.

Bevan said the course focuses on supervision, safety, program quality and operations.

“We’re trying to teach students to become youth development professionals, and give them an understanding that this is a critical time in a child’s life,” Bevan said. “We serve as a primary link between academic support, enrichment activities, physical health and nutrition, especially now more so than ever. With schools being

remote, our industry has operated almost as a pseudo school.”

Richard Greco, dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies at STCC, said the pandemic has highlighted the need to find ways to support children when school is not in session.

“We know that parents have a need to find a place for their kids to go when they’re working,” Greco said. “Our goal was to offer a course with somebody who has firsthand experience in this field to give STCC students a great education on how to develop curriculums, make sure students are safe and have nutritious food in front of them.”

Greco thought Bevan would be an ideal instructor for the class after reading a profile of him in a local media outlet. Bevan, who grew up in Holyoke, spent

time as a child at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke as well as the Greater Holyoke YMCA. He gained an appreciation of programs and services designed to enrich the lives of young people when they weren’t in school.

“I’m a proud product of the out-of-school-time industry,” Bevan said. “I really leaned on my lessons that I learned in the out-of-school-time world to propel my career professionally as well as personally.”

The spring semester at STCC starts Jan. 25.

To enroll in the class or apply to be a student at STCC, visit stcc.edu/apply or call Admissions at (413) 755-4812. For questions about the Out of School Time class, email Aimee Dalenta: adalenta@stcc.edu, or Jennifer Wallace-Johnson: jwjohnson@stcc.edu.



SPORTS

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Football committee mulls tournament options

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – While the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is just hoping to have a regular football season much like the fall and winter modified seasons, the Tournament Management Committee and Football Committee of the MIAA is thinking about life after the pandemic.

The pandemic took away the traditional 2020 fall season and football is supposed to take place during a Fall 2 or “bubble” season, which begins in late February.

However, assumingly, in the fall of 2021, when high schools are seemingly going to be able to play under normal conditions and with a normal schedule that includes tournaments, a new football tournament will be forthcoming.

It seems like long time ago that the member schools of the MIAA voted in favor of dropping the sectional tournaments in favor of one statewide tournament, that in the case of many sports, will include a 32-team bracket with the opportunity to play in if a team finishes with a .500 record.

But in football, a .500 record does not guarantee entrée into the tournament. That has always been the case



Options for a new football playoff format, which will feature a statewide tournament beginning in the fall, are being considered.

as Western Massachusetts football teams had a ranking system that put the top four teams in each division in the playoffs. Football also had more than the four divisions many other sports like soccer and basketball have.

The Football Committee of the MIAA began meeting recently about the issue. One plan was presented by the Massachusetts High School Football Coaches Association.

The plan would have

a 10-game, but 12-week regular season concluding on Thanksgiving. In recent years, the regular season was ended after eight games, with qualifying teams playing playoff games in weeks 9 and 10, the state semifinals between Week 10 and Thanksgiving, and Thanksgiving Day's game a simple exhibition. In a lot of cases, teams qualifying for state final games would not play regulars on Thanksgiving to guarantee health in the state finals.



Could rival matchups on Thanksgiving be in danger depending on what direction the MIAA goes in for playoffs.

File photos

The coaches' association proposal would restore Thanksgiving as a regular season game. The association also submitted a plan for a nine-game schedule with playoffs starting before Thanksgiving and finishing after as it is currently constituted.

A group of Eastern Mass. coaches and athletic directors have also developed seven and eight-game proposals that would entail having 16 teams qualifying for a state tournament

in each division under the seven game, and eight teams per division in the eight-game season. Under both proposals the state finals would actually take place before Thanksgiving, and teams would again play Thanksgiving games as exhibitions.

With all the proposals out, the Football Committee has developed a survey to be sent to principals and athletic directors

See FOOTBALL, page 10

Winter sports scheduled to begin next week

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Winter sports are scheduled to get underway next week, with practices beginning on Jan. 11.

Practices were originally scheduled to start on Jan. 4, but the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference made the decision to move back a week, though at this point, it is very unclear how many schools will be participating in the winter season and whether or not those teams will have to further modify schedules.

While the PVIAC wanted to give Western Mass. schools time during the month of December to secure permission to play sports through school committees, health departments, and other public officials, some of those permissions were contingent on the various criteria surrounding current coronavirus cases.

In the case of Holyoke, the city needed to be out

of the “red” and no longer labeled a high-risk community by Dec. 24, and remain out of the red for three weeks in order to begin practices on Jan. 11. However, that has not happened.

Additionally, schools like West Springfield and Belchertown are among those that will not play communities that are red, further complicating the scheduling.

As of the Dec. 31 Department of Public Health report, most town and cities in Western Massachusetts in Hampden and Hampshire County are in the red and considered high-risk as the second surge continues, especially with rising numbers following the holiday season.

Some schools also have agreements with teachers' unions regarding how schools will proceed in the event a community goes into the red. In many cases, a high school's coaching staff is

See SPORTS, page 10

Thompson to hold virtual race series

THOMPSON, Conn. – Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park will come to virtual life three times during the winter months, as a new iRacing series will give drivers and fans a chance to prepare for the 2021 season. In a series promoted by Souza Media, full-time Modified, Late Model & Super Late Model drivers from

across New England will compete in three different races -- including the virtual historic Thompson 300 -- with one-race in January, another in February and a final in March.

The series will help preview the real-life season at Thompson for 2021 -- which is slated to begin with the annual Icebreaker weekend from April

9-11, and hold six oval events, promoted by the American Canadian Tour and Pro All Star Series. All three iRacing events will take place on Saturday, Jan. 23, Feb. 20 and March 20 -- and will all begin with the drop of the green flag at 2 p.m. The feature races will air live, in full, on Extreme Sim TV, via Facebook and YouTube. Qualifying heat races, consolation races and a B-Main will be conducted prior to the broadcast start.

The three iRacing events will include an opener with iRacing's SK Modified, previewing the Sunoco Modified season at Thompson, on January 23, for a 100-lap event. The second will put some of New England's best Late Model stars together in ACT-style Late Models for their own 100-lapper on February 20. The final will help promote and preview the return of the historic Thompson 300, as Tour-Type Modifieds are used for a virtual 300-lapper on March 20. In real-life, officials are bringing back the Thompson 300 as part

See RACE, page 10

Virtual Thompson iRacing Series

Three races previewing 2021

- January 23 - SK Modified 100
- February 20 - Late Model 100
- March 20 - Virtual Thompson 300

Must be full-time current or past driver in Modifieds, Super Late Models or Late Models

Register: <http://www.kylesouza.com/thompson-iracing-series>

A virtual racing series is set to take place later this month.

Submitted photo

Region dealt major blow as Thunderbirds cancel season

SPRINGFIELD – This week, the Springfield Thunderbirds announced that they are one of three AHL franchises that have elected to opt out of play for the upcoming 2020-2021 season. The decision, made in conjunction with their NHL Affiliate, the St. Louis Blues, was based on numerous safety and logistical concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic and will allow the organization to turn its full focus towards the 2021-22 season. The Thunderbirds will maintain their status as active members of the AHL and return to play next season.

Thunderbirds President, Nathan Costa offered the following statement about the decision:

“Over the past few months we have worked tirelessly with the St. Louis Blues to explore every possible ave-

nue for returning to play this season. Unfortunately, due to health and safety concerns, travel logistics, new player supply rules, and other considerations the Blues and Thunderbirds collectively determined that it was in the best interests of all parties to opt out for this season. Given the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Massachusetts, it has also become clear that we will be unable to host fans at our games in the foreseeable future. As an independently-owned franchise, our foremost obligation is to ensure that our team is financially viable for the long term, something that is



not possible without gameday revenue. Our organization has built one of the most exciting stories in all of professional hockey and remains as committed as ever to building upon that success in Springfield. We continue to have a strong relationship with the St. Louis Blues, the City of Springfield, the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, and all those who have both been helpful and supportive during this time. We have already turned our attention to next season and are actively working with the Blues, our season ticket holders, and corporate partners to ensure that 2021-2022 is our stron-

gest season yet.”

A statement released by St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations/General Manager Doug Armstrong said, “professional sports have been impacted by the inability to open arenas and facilities to their fans. That is particularly true at the minor professional level where fan attendance is the lifeblood of business operations. We were truly excited to come to Springfield this season and are disappointed that COVID-19 has prevented this from happening. We look forward to working with the Thunderbirds in the 2021-22 season and beyond.”

For more information or to become a 2021-2022 Springfield Thunderbirds ticket member, call (413) 739-GOAL (4625) or visit www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com.

New umpires needed for 2021 season

REGION – The Western Massachusetts Baseball Umpire Association is looking for individuals who are interested in umpiring baseball at the high school and youth level. The WMBUA services high school baseball and various other leagues in the Greater Springfield area/Hampden County.

The WMBUA’s first year members class will be held for roughly five to six weeks, beginning in February. The class dates right now are fluid as the organization monitors what hap-

pens with the COVID-19 pandemic. Class is usually one or two nights per week from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The class takes place in the First Baptist Church of East Longmeadow’s classrooms at 50 Parker Street. Classes may also be virtual if COVID-19 does not allow for in-person meetings.

If you are interested in taking the classes, contact Chris Meffen, the WMBUA Secretary, via email at cmeffen8017@gmail.com or visit the WMBUA website at <http://wmbua.org>.

Pioneers to host Pelham clinic

LUDLOW – Western United Pioneers FC is excited to offer a soccer clinic in Pelham, MA for players in the Massachusetts North Region. The fall clinic provides off-season training and skill development by WUP FC coaches. There are two sessions available. sign up for one or both. It makes a great holiday gift for friends and family members.

This program is offered to boys and girls born in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The four-week program includes one practice per week for a total of \$65 per session (\$130 for 2 sessions). Sessions will consist of a max of 15 players per field (COVID regulation for

the players’ safety).

SESSION 1: MONDAYS 1/11, 1/25, 2/1, & 2/8

- Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.
- Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

SESSION 2: MONDAYS 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, & 3/15

- Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.
- Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

The sessions will be held at Pelham Elementary School at 45 Amherst Road, Pelham, MA 01002.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

HOLYOKE – Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching “turleysports.” We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with

your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

SPORTS, from page 9

included in the union negotiations.

In one bubble, Agawam, Westfield, and West Springfield all have permission to play, but Hampshire, Holyoke, and Northampton are question marks.

There are also further modifications for the ice hockey schedule as fewer schools have hockey programs in Western Massachusetts. One thing you will not see in the modified winter season is a team like Agawam or Minnechaug making its way to the other side of the state to play other teams in Central and Eastern Mass.

Bubble play is limited to teams in the region. One bubble will feature all of the teams in the Berry Division, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Minnechaug, Westfield, and West Springfield, with Amherst added into the league this year. Amherst has been one of the top Division 3A teams in recent years.

Teams that are allowed to begin playing actual games could do so in about two weeks.

Basketball, swimming, and ice hockey were the sports approved to take place this winter. The season normally starts in mid-December.

FOOTBALL, from page 9

for feedback. A decision on the playoff format will hopefully be made sometime in the spring in time for scheduling to take place.

As of press time, the MIAA has not made any decision about any type of playoffs for the modified football

season taking place in February. There will be no playoffs for the winter season, and the fall season also did not have any tournaments.

Arguments against extending the football season further into December specifically include making winter athletes wait too long between seasons to start basketball, hockey, and wrestling.

How to contact the Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.

RACE, from page 9

of the Sunoco World Series of Racing at Thompson in October of 2021.

“This iRacing series will give drivers and fans of Thompson Speedway a chance to come together during the cold winter months for some virtual racing,” Kyle Souza, owner of Souza Media, said. “We’re looking forward to watching the Thompson 300 in real-life, but we think this virtual experience will showcase some of what it will take to win the real-life event and get fans energized for the October 2021 race.”

A maximum of 29 drivers will start each race, in order to keep the car count reasonable on a tight, banked track, and produce green flag racing. Out of the 29 competitors, 28 drivers will qualify through the heats, consi’s and B-Main sessions, while one provisional is available for a most recent Thompson track champion or Modified, Late Model or Super Late Model champion, if needed. If no champions fail to qualify, the provisional may be used for a promoters option. Qualifying will begin at 10 a.m. on each of the race days, while there will also be multiple practice sessions prior to race day.

In order to be eligible for the events, drivers must fit one of the requirements put in place by officials. Race officials have the final determination on eligibility and may elect to refund participants who register but don’t fit qualifications. For all three events, drivers must be:

- A current or past full-time weekly competitor in Late Models, Super Late Models or Modifieds
- A current or past touring series competitor in Late Models, Super Late Models or Modifieds
- Immediate crew member of one of the above drivers -- defined as either a car owner, crew chief or spotter.

*If all spots are not filled for the event five days prior to event start, fans of Thompson Speedway, Modifieds, Super Late Models or Late Models will

be able to register to fill the spots*

The first 60 entered drivers will be registered for the event. Anyone who registers past that 60 number will be placed on a waitlist. Registration fees are \$15 per event, or \$45 for the entire series. Registration can be completed at kylesouza.com/thompson-iracing-series. In order for a registration to be counted as one of 60, payment must be received. Drivers who complete registration will be invited to the league on iRacing directly to confirm their registration has been received.

A payout is guaranteed for the top-five at the end of each race, with a minimum of \$50 to win the feature. The virtual Thompson 300 will pay at least \$125 to win. Sponsorship opportunities for the series are available by emailing kylesouzamedia@gmail.com. Sponsorships will include full race deals and contingency awards.

Virtual Thompson Series schedule:

- January 23 -- SK Modified -- 100 laps
- February 20 -- Late Models -- 100 laps
- March 20 -- Tour-Type Modified -- 300 laps



Notice of Public Hearing
The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm** to hear a Special Permit application of Jill LaBeau per section 6.1.8.1 of the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance for a driveway at the front of the house facing the house at 23 O'Connor Avenue (Map 074 Block 00 Parcel 024). Meeting will take place remotely and can be accessed via **www.zoom.us Meeting ID: 826 1397 0812** Meeting Passcode: 894276 or by call in at 1 (929)205-6099 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. Written public comment can be submitted to publiccomment@holyoke.org. For information on this application please

contact City Council Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at anderson-burgosj@holyoke.org or by phone at (413) 322-5525 DGR Chair: Bartley 01/08, 01/15/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD20P2129EA**
**Estate of:
George G Benard
Date of Death: 11/12/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal**

Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by **Donald Benard** of Chicopee, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: **Donald Benard** of Chicopee, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00**

a.m. on the return day of 01/25/2021.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are enti-

tled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: December 21, 2020
Suzanne T. Seguin
Register of Probate
01/08/2021

Notice of Public Hearing
The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm** to hear an Application for a Special Permit for Home Occupation of Gina and Raquel Fasoli Figueroa per

section 4.8.2 of the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance for a painting business at 145 Mountain View Dr (Map 135 Block 00 Parcel 006). Meeting will take place remotely and can be accessed via **www.zoom.us Meeting ID: 826 1397 0812 Meeting Passcode: 894276** or by call in at 1 (929)205-6099 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. Written public comment can be submitted to publiccomment@holyoke.org. For information on these applications please contact City Council Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at anderson-burgosj@holyoke.org or by phone at (413) 322-5525
DGR Chair: David Bartley 01/08, 01/15/2021

In The News

MARRERO, from page 1

gram and promoting diversification of the Island's energy portfolio.
• At the New York City Energy Policy Office, Marcos managed a "paper" electric utility, and worked on City strategies to reduce energy costs to consumers, increase energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption.
• In our region, Marcos taught Environmental Policy at the UMass Amherst campus, and at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission his principal projects were related to increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy in communities throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties.
• As part of City government, Marcos has had the opportunity to team up with HG&E on several fronts, including efforts through the Holyoke

Innovation District task force, the clean-up and reuse of the Parsons Paper site, economic development projects, and most recently on strategizing for one of the utility's most ambitious goals, reducing our community's natural gas consumption.
"My upcoming departure from the administration has not minimized my interest to remain an active member of our community," said Marrero. "I have always enjoyed my work with the leadership at the HG&E, who I immensely respect and have been driven to emulate in their professionalism, preparedness and effectiveness. It will be a great honor to bring my life experience to the table as a Commissioner at a time of rapid technological change in the energy and telecommunications realms, where HG&E holds assets and provides vital services to our community."

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USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN **BEEF RIBEYE STEAKS \$6⁶⁷ lb**

USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS **BEEF TOP SIRLOIN STEAKS or SPOON ROAST \$3⁹⁹ lb**

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USDA INSP. FROZEN **ASSORTED BROWNIES LARGE 4 PACK 99¢ ea**

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The Sun
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

CAREER

and *Education*

St. Mary's Parish School provides foundation

At the heart of St. Mary's Parish School is our passion for excellence in all things. We believe that each student who attends our school will benefit from the quality of instruction they receive. Academically, a classical curriculum infused with 21st-century skills will provide every SAINT with the solid foundation necessary to excel at the next level of study.

Socially, St. Mary's is a community built upon a foundation of kindness, acceptance, and integrity. It is a community in which each member looks out for the other, and the bonds of friendship that are formed here, last a lifetime.

Spiritually, students will broaden and deepen their understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the beliefs of the Roman Catholic tradition. Additionally, through their study of religion, all students gain the tools to examine morality and justice in their lives and in the world. St. Mary's SAINTS are young people

who understand that faith is a lifelong journey of prayer, learning, and service, which broadens their perspective and leads toward ever deeper communion with God and others.

We are proud of the distinction that our students have received in all areas of academics, arts, athletics, and extra-curricular activities. Each year we recognize the success of our seniors as they receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and continue their academic journeys across the nation at prestigious colleges and universities.

Recently, we have embarked on several initiatives that have added to the success of St. Mary's overall program. We have been blessed with the financial ability to improve upon technology, and were able to introduce a laptop program where each student is provided a laptop for a very small lease fee. After 3 years, the laptop officially belongs to the student. Meanwhile, if anything at

all happens to the laptop, the repair is covered and the student is offered a loaner. Our curriculum is based on the Great Books and we use a university schedule, allowing us to increase electives in our course of studies and at the same time, better preparing students for college. Lastly, our students are offered the choice hundreds of VHS courses, which allow them to take advantage of specialized courses outside of our traditional college prep, honors and AP course offerings.

BREAKING NEWS! Starting in 20/21, we will be offering transportation benefitting students from the Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke areas. A centrally located bus stop will be positioned on Riverdale Street, West Springfield.

Plan a shadow day at St. Mary's Parish High School – where no student will be denied enrollment based on financial need, and every student will be an important member of the SAINT family!

St. Joan of Arc School announces new principal


St. Joan of Arc School is happy to announce that William McDonald is our new principal beginning January 4, 2021. Mr. McDonald has been a vice principal and principal for over 15 years. Starting as a teacher and working his way to being a principal in Framingham, MA, he most recently was at an elementary school in Thompsonville, CT. SJA School is an elementary school with grades PreK through grade 8. We welcome his experience and knowledge and he is excited to become part of our SJA community.

Professions that may be thriving in 2030

New Year's resolutions can serve as valuable motivational tools as people look to make positive changes in their lives. Health-related goals like quitting smoking and losing weight annually appear at or near the top of lists documenting the most popular resolutions. But many people also see New Year's resolutions as a great vehicle to kick-start positive changes in their professional lives.

See *PROFESSIONS*, page 16

EXPERIENCE the **STM** DIFFERENCE



OPEN ENROLLMENT is happening now.



St. MARY'S PARISH SCHOOL

2nd Century of Educating Saints

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www.stmsaints.org

Westfield State University offering Addiction Counselor Education Program

WESTFIELD — The College of Graduate and Continuing Education at Westfield State University is currently accepting applications for the 2021/2022 Addiction Counselor Education (ACE) Program. Classes will be held in a hybrid format on evenings and weekends beginning in September and ending in May. The goal of this non-credit certificate program, offered at the University since 1991, is to

provide students with the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary for the successful treatment of individuals and families afflicted by alcoholism and/or other drug addictions. This program has been highly instrumental in the professional development of individuals in the western Massachusetts area whom are currently working in or interested in becoming a part of the growing healthcare field

of addiction services. The application and application instructions for the ACE program can be found on the website www.westfield.ma.edu/ace. For more information or to have an application mailed to you, contact Brandon Fredette at bfredette@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-8033. Founded in 1839 by Horace Mann, Westfield State University is an education leader

committed to providing every generation of students with a learning experience built on its founding principle as the first public co-educational college in America to offer an education without barrier to race, gender or economic status. This spirit of innovative thinking and social responsibility is forged in a curriculum of liberal arts and professional studies that creates a vital community of engaged

learners who become confident, capable individuals prepared for leadership and service to society. For more information, visit us at www.westfield.ma.edu, follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/westfieldstate](https://twitter.com/westfieldstate), or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WestfieldStateUniversity>.

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www.MacDuffie.org

RSVP to admissions@MacDuffie.org for a Virtual Open House link:

Wednesday, Jan. 20th
6:00-7:00 p.m. EST

Thursday, Jan. 21st
12:00-1:00p.m. EST

Wednesday, Jan. 28th
8:00-9:00 a.m. EST

66 School Street
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413-255-0000



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The ACE Program will give you a leading edge professionally and prepare you for a career in the addiction treatment workforce. It also prepares you for licensure eligibility with the Massachusetts Board of Substance Abuse Counselor Certification and the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services with the MA Department of Public Health.*

**Additional requirements may be needed.*

Classes will be held in a hybrid format on evenings and weekends starting in September.

Make your life's work about changing lives.

For more information, call (413) 572-8033 or go to westfield.ma.edu/ace



Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF
Graduate &
Continuing Education

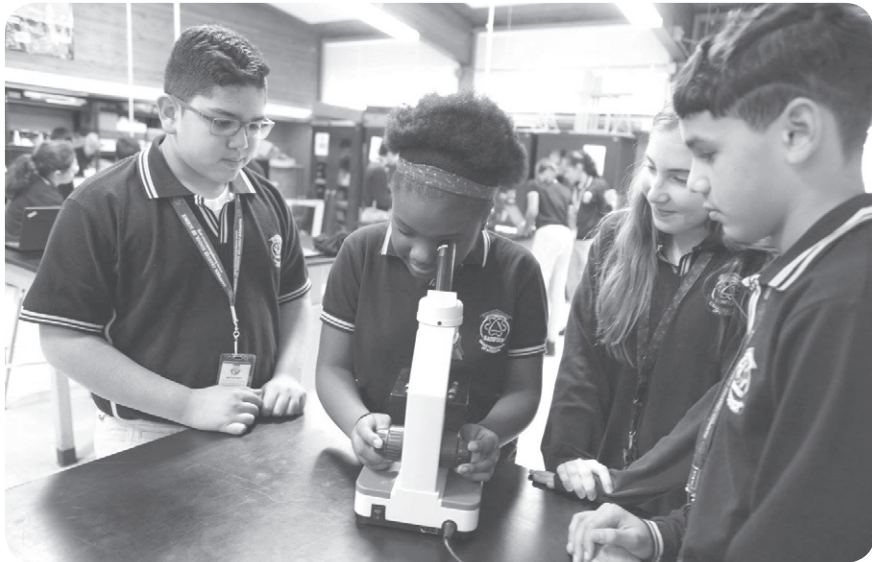


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Tuesday, January 5th 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 23rd 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, February 9th 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 27th 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 2nd 6:00 p.m.

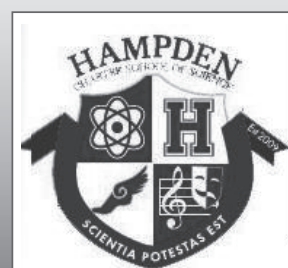
*Join one of our Virtual Open Houses
at www.hampdencharter.org*

HCSS - WEST

Agawam, Holyoke, Westfield,
West Springfield

HCSS - EAST

Chicopee, Ludlow, Springfield,
West Springfield



A Career in Head Start

The first 5 years of a child's life are so important and since 1965, HCS Head Start has helped thousands of children and families prepare for school and life. We know that it takes a big heart to help shape growing minds and if you want to work with children and families in the local community, Head Start might be the place for you. The Head Start advantage offers both families and their children, birth to five, an extraordinary school readiness experience. Head Start provides access to high-quality learning, health and nutritional services, mental health services, family engagement opportunities and services to children with special needs.

Educators who decide to teach in a comprehensive early learning setting have the opportunity to work collaboratively with other specialty areas that are designed to prepare vulnerable children for future educational success. Data shows that when children are enrolled in a high quality Head Start program they are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond. One of the secrets to the success of Head Start is the recognition of parents as their child's first teacher. Staff and parents work together, learning from one another, to create the best early educational experience both at home and at preschool. This is done because when parents are involved and engaged in their child's education, children have better outcomes.

In addition to teaching, Head Start also has various career opportunities in the areas of health, nutrition, human services, administration, mental health and special education. Professional development opportunities and career ladders are built within the Head Start model to promote growth and advancement.

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc. offers programs in several cities and towns in Western Massachusetts working with over 1,000 children each year. If you are interested in a Head Start career please visit www.hcsheadstart.org or call 413-788-6522.

6 steps to organize your home office

Remote working has become popular in recent years, but the "working-from-home" economy bloomed exponentially as the world was forced to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, as of summer 2020, 42 percent of the United States labor force was working from home full-time.

The need for home office spaces has increased as more people work from home. Many people have retrofitted various spaces around their homes into areas to get work done. More organized home work spaces can increase productivity. Individuals can follow these guidelines to create effective, organized home offices.

Begin with the desk

The desk is the primary spot where work will take place. The right desk accessories can provide visual appeal and also serve practical purposes. Have cups for holding pens and pencils, baskets and bins for larger items, and store whatever you can elsewhere so it does not lead to clutter on the desk. Store wireless printers in a cabinet or even on a bookshelf so it doesn't take up real estate on the desk.

Create a printing station

While you're moving that wireless printer elsewhere, designate a space to serve as the central printing hub. This way children who need to print assignments for school will



know where to go as well. Printer supplies like extra ink cartridges and printer paper can be kept in decorative storage boxes nearby.

Increase your shelving

Shelving can help keep items organized and off the desk in home offices without closets or drawers. Look for shelves that blend in with decor but are sturdy enough to be functional.

Organize paperwork

Figure out a system that works for you to help tidy up papers you choose to save. While some papers can be scanned and stored as digital files, color-coded file folders can organize statements and other important documents. This makes it easy to find the folder you need when looking for certain documents.

Establish a charging station

Repurpose certain items, such as a desk organizer, into an easily accessible electronics charging station where phones and tablets can charge at one time.

Make essential binders

HGTV suggests making binders that can store the most important papers for easy access — even in an emergency. Set up a binder for automotive paperwork, including repair receipts, a medical binder where key medical records are kept, a binder for manuals for devices in the home, and one to store financial planning documents.

These organizational tips can help remedy common problems around a home office.

HEAD START IS WITH YOU @HOME

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, serving pregnant moms and children from 0 - 5 years of age, is enrolling children for **Head Start @Home** — a remote early learning opportunity.

Our remote programs support children's learning with educational activities that are individualized and developmentally appropriate.

Head Start @Home also provides family engagement — including virtual parent meetings — and the continuity of comprehensive services, including health, mental health, nutrition and family services.



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or visit
hcsheadstart.org



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St. Thomas the Apostle School
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In-Person Tours and Registration
for September 2021 will begin on
SATURDAY, JANUARY 23
and **SUNDAY, JANUARY 24.**

Please call the school or email us at
jimwevan50@comcast.net to schedule a tour.
We are also available for tours during the week
beginning on Monday, January 25 after 2:00 p.m.

*Building the Foundation for
Faith and Academic Excellence*



PROFESSIONS, from page 12

According to Statista, finding a new job was the eighth most popular New Year's resolution in 2019. And finding a new job figures to be an even more common resolution for 2021, as the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has sparked a recession that saw millions of people across the globe lose their jobs.

Professionals who want to switch careers in the near future may want to consider professions that are expected to experience significant growth in the years ahead. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for the following professionals is expected to grow considerably between now and 2029.

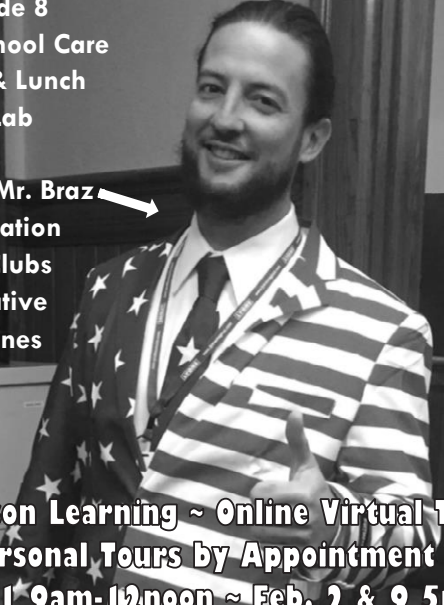
- **Wind turbine service technicians**
Expected growth (between 2019 and 2029): 60.7 percent
- **Nurse practitioners**
Expected growth: 52.4 percent

- **Solar photovoltaic installers**
Expected growth: 50.5 percent
- **Occupational therapy assistants**
Expected growth: 34.6 percent
- **Statisticians**
Expected growth: 34.6 percent
- **Home health and personal care aides**
Expected growth: 33.7 percent
- **Physical therapist assistants**
Expected growth: 32.6 percent
- **Medical and health services managers**
Expected growth: 31.5 percent
- **Physician assistants**
Expected growth: 31.3 percent
- **Information security analysts**
Expected growth: 31.2 percent

St. Joan of Arc School

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Enrichment Clubs
STEAM Initiative
CDC Guidelines



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Personal Tours by Appointment
Sun. Jan. 31 9am-12noon ~ Feb. 2 & 9 5pm-7pm

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seeking a community of
thoughtful peers and
educators and is a lover
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JOB POSTING

Community Engagement Coordinator
Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership & Town of Ware

Overall Duties:

The Community Engagement Coordinator will work closely with local, town-based prevention teams to strategically initiate, coordinate and sustain proven prevention strategies aimed at reducing underage youth and young adult alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and prescription drug use. Will attend local prevention teams meetings, assist with outreach and recruitment of local team members and will assist the local teams to create and implement annual action plans that are fully aligned with region-wide goals, objectives and action plans. He/she will work with local team 'captains' to engender support for substance use prevention. Will also work as part of the broader Prevention Partnership team to contribute to and ensure that required fiscal and programmatic reports are completed.

Qualifications:

B.A. or B.S in Public Health or related field preferred. Prior experience in health-related outreach/communications, meeting facilitation, community organizing and health planning.

Knowledge of and skilled at outreach, follow-up, data collection, community presentations. Excellent writing skills, including reports and promotional materials; knowledge of the workings of municipal government; strong computer skills including knowledge of social media tools. Must demonstrate: sensitivity to, and awareness of cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and social diversity including LGBTQ; awareness of community strengths and culture; ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders; ability to work independently and as part of a team; ability to maintain objectivity, fairness in dealing with people.

Salary & Hours:

Position is a town of Ware employee and funded by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); position is 28 hours per week with potential for the job to become full-time in the future. Hours are primarily 9-5 Monday through Friday; some evening/weekend meetings and events.

To apply for the position, E-mail a Cover Letter and Resume to:
Gail Gramarossa, Project Director, Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership
ggramarossa@townofware.com



Bringing diversity into STEM fields is this STCC grad's mission in life

By LAURIE LOISEL

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. – Vastly underrepresented in the STEM field, women and people of color often feel marginalized and unsupported in the halls of academia. That was true for Carolyn Gardner-Thomas until she came to Springfield Technical Community College, where she graduated in 1998 with an associate degree in engineering.

“STCC is where I found community – that’s where I found people who looked like me and people who wanted to work with me, smaller classes, instructors I could connect with,” she said. “That, coupled with the fact that it fit my budget. I could pay for the courses I was taking.”

After STCC, Gardner-Thomas went on to UMass Amherst where she earned a bachelor’s degree in engineering in 2000 – and years later she would go on to earn a Ph.D. in STEM education at the state’s flagship campus. STEM refers to the areas of study and careers within science, technology, engineering and math disciplines. It’s no secret that women and people of color don’t flock to those fields.

Gardner-Thomas has devoted her career to expanding the possibilities for women and Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) in STEM, encouraging greater diversity in the field she loves. She credits her time at STCC, in part, with helping her understand how that could be done.

She ran a STEM starter academy at Holyoke Community College for a year, at UMass for three years she directed

the STEM Ambassador Program and today is co-director of the Mathematics for Teaching master’s program at the Harvard Extension School.

Aminah Bergeron, in her second year at STCC majoring in mechanical engineering, is just the kind of student Gardner-Thomas wants to see entering the field. Bergeron, 27, who calls herself a “proud mom” and is working her way through college, said she has felt both welcomed and supported at STCC.

She remembers early-on a meeting with Professor Zahi Haddad when she expressed doubt about her abilities in computer science, asking if he thought she could do it. “And he responded immediately, ‘yes, why not? You can do whatever you like,’” she said.

Later, thanks to encouragement from STCC Professor of Engineering and Physical Sciences Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh, Bergeron took part in a competitive NASA program that flew her to a NASA facility in Virginia for a week. She aims to go on for a bachelor’s degree in engineering after STCC, hoping eventually to land a job as an engineer at Pratt and Whitney. But she’s got an even bigger dream: One day she wants to become a CEO.

Bergeron’s experience may illustrate how much things have changed since Gardner-Thomas first entered the STEM field as a pre-med student in the 1980s.

Born on the Caribbean island of Antigua, Gardner-Thomas came to the United States in 1986 to attend college.

See STCC, page 18

Enrichment clusters still valuable during the pandemic

(One of the experiences lost last spring when we pivoted to remote instruction was the enrichment cluster. As we look ahead to this spring, we are excited to plan re-imagined clusters as we continue in-person instruction for all students at Academy Hill. To learn more about our response to the pandemic, please visit our website at www.AcademyHill.org!)

At AHS, one of the most cherished and highly anticipated academic traditions are end-of-the-year enrichment clusters. Clusters, as they are more commonly known at Academy Hill, are held during a reserved three-day period the final week of school. Clusters provide students with an opportunity to explore a topic of their choice, in the company of a mixed-age group of schoolmates, in extraordinary depth. Clusters culminate with a showcase, during which students display a project or product created, or a skill acquired during the three-day period. Clusters are facilitated by school staff, parents, alumni and other community members who relish this opportunity to share their passions and professions with students.

Over the years, students have explored such diverse topics as cheesemaking, entomology, the art of psyanky, silk screen printing, dogs, and rocketry. Many of the ideas for cluster topics are generated by student interest, as exhibited over the school year. Clusters most often include a field trip or two, allowing students the chance to meet professional practitioners and take part in authentic experiences. During the last cluster cycle, a small group of middle school students explored the play Hamlet, by William Shakespeare. The cluster was facilitated by our middle school literacy teacher and an alumni parent (who is also a professor of English, specializing in Shakespeare). Cluster participants took a trip to Shakespeare & Co. in Lenox, where they enjoyed a private, customized tour that included visits to performance spaces, costume and prop shops, and the set design studio. At each location students were able to try on and try out costume pieces and props such as crowns and swords. The field trip brought their classroom cluster experience into vivid focus, sparking a strong desire in several students to learn more about Shakespeare and theater. Another cluster cooked its way through Italy, learning about the geography, culture and special cuisines of the different regions of the country. The students, ranging in grade level from 4th through 8th grade, learned a bit of the language, chose a particular region to explore in greater depth, and visited both Red Rose Pizzeria and La Fiorentina Bakery - right here in Springfield - to sample dishes and to learn more about Italian cooking and baking. The cluster was facilitated by an administrator of Italian heritage, as well as our Latin and Classics teacher; the latter bringing her vast knowledge of the Italian peninsula to the experience. The cluster culminated in a day of preparing and then



sharing the students’ homemade Italian food with guests.

Families, homeschool groups and moms/dads clubs might easily replicate the enrichment cluster experience for their own children and their friends. Clusters are a wonderful way to pass several days during a school vacation week. They also give new meaning to staycations, and might serve to prevent a “summer slide” as they help energize students before the return to school in September. Clusters can be quite manageable to organize and carry out, with just a little pre-planning. Start with what interests your children. When you pick a top that fascinates children, you pave the way for a fun, interactive experience. The first day should include an exploration of the topic, providing an opportunity for the children to learn more about the subject of the cluster. You might use clips from documentaries, you might take a trip to the local library, or you might create an extensive web search and scavenger hunt based on the topic. On day one you can also decide what project you might want to create or what skill you might want to cultivate as you learn more about this topic. Usually, day three or four is reserved for creating and showcasing projects and skills. Next, explore what businesses, museums, historical sites, farms or other places in the area might be open to a visit. Clusters are most meaningful when they are authentic. Alternately, there may be a practicing professional who is open to a virtual field trip or interview. Model creativity for your children as you seek out an immersive opportunity that will allow your children to understand how their interests might turn into careers or vocations. Librarians and museum staff can be extremely helpful with this step! Finally, allow your children time to create a project or product based on what they learned, and encourage them to share their creations and new skills with others.

To learn more about Academy Hill and our unique educational programs for students PreK – grade 8, please visit www.AcademyHill.org. We are now accepting application for the 2021 – 2022 school year (there are limited openings in PreK and Kindergarten for the current year).

Did you know?

STCC classes are designed for transfer to 4-year colleges?

Whether your goal is a 2-year degree or to save money on a 4-year degree, **Springfield Technical Community College** is always here for you.

Spring Online Classes start January 25.

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STCC, from page 17

A student at UMass Amherst as a pre-med major, she found herself increasingly unhappy.

“I felt like it was a space that did not welcome me and who I was, and it wasn’t that anybody was mean,” she said. “You feel yourself to be excluded and invisible yet in other ways hyper-visible.”

She quit the program in her senior year and worked in various fields, including in payroll, that used her passion and talent in mathematics. Later, working at an engineering firm, she discovered she had love for and skill in engineering, and was promoted to an engineering position without the degree. The company encouraged her to earn her degree, which is when she enrolled at STCC and found her home.

Gardner-Thomas believes what she found at STCC – and what can be offered in an intentional way at other institutions – is building a sense of community for people who feel sidelined and invisible by offering study groups, inviting people for dinner, having social events, “so you feel like you have a family away from your home.” Another strategy is to pair-up newer students with others who are more seasoned in a supportive, mentoring relationship.

“That is what I instill in the students I work with – that as you go through, you pave the way for others to come through,” she said.

Women on the STEM faculty at STCC are trying to do just that. McGinnis-Cavanaugh, a 1998 STCC graduate, said she was very often the only woman in the classroom during her time at STCC and also at UMass, where she graduated in 2001. And the numbers of women in STEM majors are still too low, she contends, which is why in 2014 she started a STCC chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and opened it to all women in any STEM major.

“I just thought it would be great for our students to have an organization that valued them,” she said. “It just really opens their eyes to what’s out there in the world in terms of STEM pathways.”

McGinnis-Cavanaugh says over her 16 years on the STCC faculty, while she’s seen improvement in the situation for women in STEM, she’s not satisfied.

“I think it’s better, but I don’t think it’s good,” she said. “I think we have a ways to go on that.”

Barbara Washburn, interim dean of the STEM school at STCC, said she believes raising awareness in the general public about what STEM fields are will help open doors for women, as do special programs that provide guidance and mentorship to young women in the field.

Gardner-Thomas contends STCC is an institution that in a sense has no choice but to be welcoming because of the people who attend.



Carolyn Gardner-Thomas Beth McGinnis-Cavanaugh Aminah Bergeron

“Naturally you will see people that look like you. I’m a big advocate for community colleges that sit in the inner city,” she said. “That is an environment that has to be welcoming because that’s who’s there.”

Meanwhile, Gardner-Thomas was among several speakers featured at a STEM careers symposium held in October 2020. In her talk, she ticked off a list of the problems facing the world that the STEM field will be instrumental in addressing, issues such as health crises (including COVID), climate challenges, food and water insecurity, and equity in education.

“The list is long and we need you – we need all of who you are. We need people that look like you with your unique identities and intersectionalities of identities so if you are an immigrant, Black, a woman like

myself, we need your experiences; we need your background,” she said. “This is the way we’re going to be able to solve problems.”

Aminah Bergeron is among those who has gotten that message loud and clear.

“STEM has always been a male-dominated field, but with the future generation we can change that,” she said. “I encourage women to pursue a career in STEM. When women come together and work with each other, we come up with ideas that are out of the ordinary.

Interested in applying to STCC? Visit stcc.edu/apply or call Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

About Springfield Technical Community College

STCC, the Commonwealth’s only technical community college, continues the pioneering

legacy of the Springfield Armory with comprehensive and technical education in manufacturing, STEM, healthcare, business, social services, and the liberal arts. STCC’s highly regarded workforce, certificate, degree, and transfer programs are the most affordable in Springfield and provide unequalled opportunity for the vitality of Western Massachusetts. Founded in 1967, the college – a designated Hispanic Serving Institution – seeks to close achievement gaps among students who traditionally face societal barriers. STCC supports students as they transform their lives through intellectual, cultural, and economic engagement while becoming thoughtful, committed and socially responsible graduates.

JOB POSTING

Youth Engagement Coordinator
Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership & Town of Ware

Overall Duties:

The Youth Engagement Coordinator will strategically identify, recruit, and engage with individuals and organizations serving youth and young adults to bring a ‘youth voice’ and participation into planning processes and activities that deliver proven prevention strategies to reduce youth substance use in the Quaboag Hills region. The Youth Engagement Coordinator will continually help build the capacity of and sustain the Partnership’s work with youth on underage drinking, nicotine and marijuana use, insuring that programs and activities are youth-driven and youth-led. Will work with Prevention Partnership team to ensure that required reports and data collection are completed.

Qualifications:

B.A. or B.S in Public Health or related field preferred. Prior experience in health-related outreach/communications with youth and young adults, community organizing and health planning. Understands unique needs of and works effectively with youth/ young

adults. Excellent writing skills, including promotional/outreach materials; knowledge of the workings of municipal government; strong computer skills including knowledge of social media tools that reach youth. Must demonstrate: sensitivity to, and awareness of cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and social diversity including LGBTQ; awareness of community strengths and rural culture; ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders; ability to work independently and as part of a team; ability to maintain objectivity, fairness in dealing with people.

Salary & Hours:

Position is a Town of Ware employee and funded by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); position 28 hours per week with potential for the job to become full-time in the future. Hours are primarily 9-5 Monday through Friday; some evening/weekend meetings and events.

To apply for the position, E-mail a Cover Letter and Resume to:

Gail Gramarossa, Project Director, Quaboag Hills Prevention Partnership
ggramarossa@townofware.com



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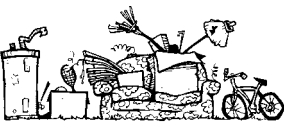
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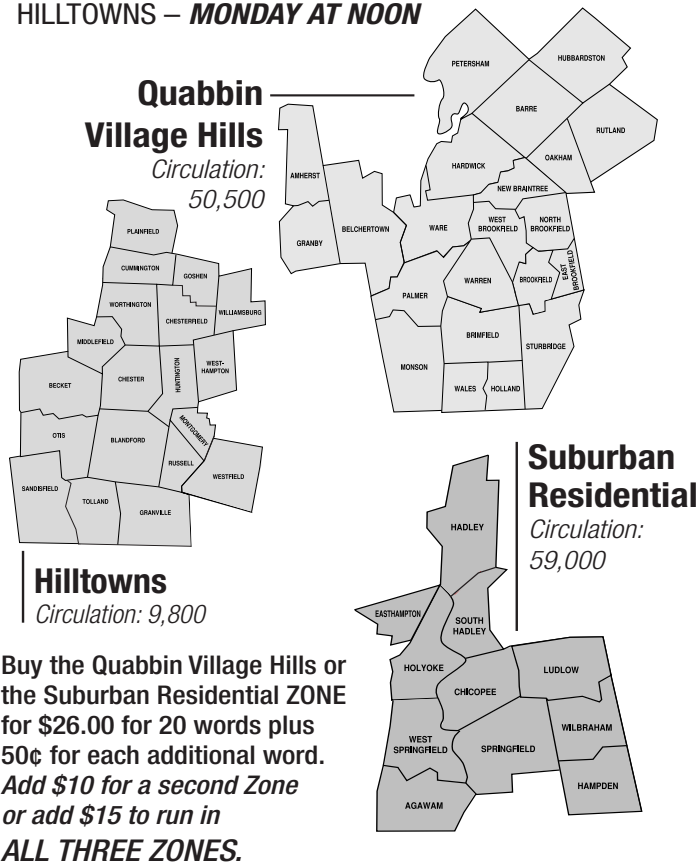
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HCC-MRC program trains disabled for cybersecurity jobs

HOLYOKE – Not long ago, Aidan Burke was working in a local supermarket, making pizza for minimum wage. It was not a job he believed held much promise for him.

Life has changed a lot since then for the 29-year-old Northampton resident.

In February, Burke started a free, intensive cybersecurity training program for people with disabilities offered by Holyoke Community College and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Ten months later, he is now poised to begin a career as a cybersecurity analyst.

Already, Burke has started an internship with NetWerks Strategic Services, an Agawam-based technology company. In recent weeks, he has interviewed for full-time benefitted positions at the Massachusetts Educational Collaborative and the Department of Youth Services. He is also a candidate for a summer internship with MassMutual.

Burke and his 14 classmates completed the Cisco Academy Cybersecurity

Training program on Dec. 10. They graduated Dec. 18, having passed their exams as Cisco Certified Network Associates and Cisco Certified Cyber-Operations Associates.

The HCC-MRC cybersecurity training program was the first of its kind in the state. Based on the success of the pilot, MRC initiated a second program in September in collaboration with Roxbury Community College and has begun recruiting for a second class at HCC that will begin in February.

For the first month of training, classes met in the cybersecurity lab in HCC’s Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development. In March, though, they moved onto Zoom as COVID-19 forced a shift to remote instruction. HCC and MRC provided laptops for students to use at home, and Cisco provided access to online simulation platforms that mimicked the “hands-on” parts of the training.

Students qualified for the program through their involvement with MRC.

Burke was recommended by his caseworker. Candidates were screened and then took an entrance exam to make sure they could handle the material and the workload.

Classes met four days a week, Monday through Thursday from about 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Singh said the students were also required to put in several hours of additional self-study on Fridays.

Cybersecurity analysts are network watchdogs, monitoring network activity, tracking alerts, guarding against cyberattacks and looking out for abnormal network behavior. They fix security problems, restore compromised systems, pinpoint conflicts, and collect evidence of criminal activity in the event of an intentional breach or legal proceeding.

“Cyber crime is up 600 percent due to the pandemic,” HCC president Christina Royal said Friday during a graduation ceremony held over Zoom. There are a lot of bad actors looking to exploit network vulnerabilities with costs estimated at \$6 trillion in 2021.

Cybersecurity is an important area that companies are needing and investing in.”

Program graduates qualify for jobs as tier 1 cybersecurity analysts. Although that is considered entry level, they can still expect to earn between \$25 and \$35 an hour to start and up to \$80,000 to \$100,000 or more a year as they advance.

Beyond the training itself, students in the program received a \$200 stipend for general expenses, career counseling and assistance with job placement.

Like many of his classmates, Burke has struggled with a number of issues, including anxiety as well as depression, PTSD and ADHD. “Just a tough combination of things,” he said, that made it tough at times just to get out of bed in the morning.

Burke said he’s grateful to Mass Rehab for recommending him for the program and for putting him in a class with others who shared and understood his struggles. It was a big confidence builder for all of them.

Free COVID-19 testing at Holyoke Community College extended until March 31

HOLYOKE – Free “Stop the Spread” COVID-19 testing at Holyoke Community College has been extended until March 31, 2021, according to the Holyoke Board of Health.

Drive-through testing at HCC is conducted six days a week in parking lot H near the western entrance to the Donahue Building on the college’s main campus, 303 Homestead Ave.

HCC has been serving as a “Stop the Spread” drive-through testing site since Aug. 26 to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Drivers are asked to enter the campus from Homestead Avenue, turn left onto the Campus Road and proceed to parking lot H. There will be signs and parking attendants on site to manage the flow of traffic.

The HCC testing site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.; and Tuesday and Thursday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Testing is free to all Massachusetts residents, and conducted on a first come, first serve basis. There are no appointments and no referral is necessary. Turnaround time for results is typically four days or fewer.

More information on all of the Stop the Spread test sites across the state can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>

Please Note: Testing may sometimes be cancelled due to inclement weather. Be sure to visit the Holyoke Board of Health website for up-to-date information on cancellations: <https://www.holyoke.org/departments/board-of-health>



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